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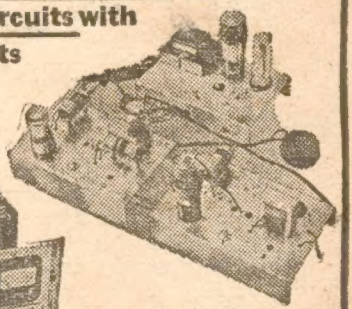

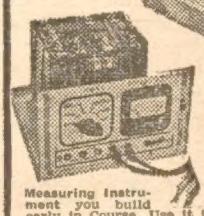

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January, 1945

NOVELETTES

Lion Trouble ..... GORDON MacCREAGH 10

In the mountains of Transylvania vampires and were-wolves bother the villagers at night but in Africa—where there are no wolves—it's were-lions that prey upon the neighbors by the dark of the moon. AMG Intelligence had established no precedent for dealing with the Dark Continent's version of the Dracula superstition so Sergeant "Tembo" Neale had to start more or less from scratch. The combat-method he chose isn't indexed in any military manual but even Tembo's colonel had to admit it was plenty effective.

Scorched Earth ..... E. HOFFMANN PRICE 44

"You're still thinking of storybook war, the old-fashioned gentleman's war. Damn it, this is *total* war!" roared Datu Ryan. "We've got to get the civilians in the towns to riot and the way to do that is to get the farmers to burn their rice crop, starve the city folk into action." So a new weapon was added to the *krisses* and *kampilans* of Guerrilla Kane's meager arsenal—fire—and from the *bondoks* of Mindanao began to rise a smoky cloud, marking the skylanes for MacArthur's men as their attack pushed ever closer.

SHORT STORIES

Tough on the Tiller ..... JOHN SCOTT DOUGLAS 34

Nels Carlson was a Coast Guard legend. He claimed his five citations were for drowning five unpopular commanders, and life had never tamed him any more than the Service had. Now, after forty years, he'd learned the hard way that men can't be bucked the way you buck the sea, and he was determined young Delaney should learn the lesson too—or be drowned in the teaching.

It's a Story They Tell ..... CHARLES A. FENTON 75

The old Whitley was a good aircraft—even if she did catch fire easily and burn very quickly. It was that midunder turret we called the dustbin that bothered us. You couldn't land with the dustbin down and when, every so often, it stuck and couldn't be raised that meant the end of the belly gunner unless—But that's the story they tell.

The Leguminous Patience of Ah Sam ..... NEILL C. WILSON 78

The boom that gold and silver and tungsten brought to Panorama City

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meant a bonanza bill-of-fare at the Wagon Tire Restaurant—oysters and squab, artichokes and fresh strawberries galore. Now, of course, with the mining camp a ghost town, the menu reads *Beans* and nothing more. But Ah Sam, the cook, still has patience—even if Bill Stryker, his prize customer, hasn't. He knows the beananza days can't last forever—any more than the bonanza ones did.

Zamballah and the Reverend.....JOHN MOORE 84
Evil had no right to flourish on an island as beautiful as Sacré Coeur but flourish it did—along with the ants, the malevolent flies, the snakes and parasites that infested its jungle. The Reverend Rowlands had long since given up hope of checking these but he still strove to thwart Zamballah's influence from his vine-choked chapel, though every time the brave old man raised his voice to pray the voodoo echoes answered louder than before.

Goliath.....JOHN FARROW 96
Captain McGregor had heard what happens to gasoline tankers that get hit by enemy shells—"A big puff—and no more ship. Jist a lot of fire on the water and smoke going way up!"—and now here he was, master of the *Plunger,* God knows how many gallons of high octane in her hold, no shells for her deck gun, and a Nazi sub surfacing to pick her off like a sitting duck. Things looked a little grim for a minute there till Mr. Tiddlewater of the engineering department went into action.

THE SERIAL

Roger Sudden (2nd of 5 parts).....THOMAS H. RADDALL 108
In which the *Fair Lady,* eight-and-thirty days out of the mouth of the Thames, makes her landfall in a brave new world and Sudden, who'd forsaken Bonnie Prince Charlie's cause for a colonial career, discovers it can be just as unpleasant for a man to be hacked to pieces in the Nova Scotian wilderness by Micmac knives and tomahawks as by claymores and broadswords on a battlefield in the Scottish Highlands.

THE FACT STORY

Everything but the Language.....F. R. BUCKLEY 105
Maybe you get along with the English beautifully but the chances are about a million to one that you don't speak the language any better than you do Urdu. Even the author, who hadn't been back to his native British heath since before the war, needed a translator to converse with his compatriots on his recent visit home.

DEPARTMENTS

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Ask Adventure Experts.....The men who furnish it 137
Lost Trails.....Where old paths cross 144
The Trail Ahead.....News of next month's issue 139

Cover painted for Adventure by Rafael DeSoto
Kenneth S. White, Editor

IF YOUR COPY OF THIS MAGAZINE IS LATE—

We regret that, due to the difficulties of wartime transportation, your *Adventure* may sometimes be a little late in reaching you. If this should happen, your patience will be appreciated. Please do not write complaining of the delay. It occurs after the magazine leaves our offices and is caused by conditions beyond our control.

—The Publishers.

THE CAMP-FIRE

Where readers, writers and adventurers meet

WE PROMISED you last month some additional material from Thomas H. Raddall on the background of his new serial and some of the research problems he encountered in writing it. Here's what he had to say about historical fiction in general and "Roger Sudden" in particular—

At school, colonial history always impressed me as a very stuffy subject, and when I came to maturity I knew why—too much of it was (and is) written by men whose whole life has been spent over documents and books. Francis Parkman alone got out into the scenes he wrote about, travelled by foot and canoe over the old war trails in New England and Canada, lived with and studied Indians and other backwoods folk, and so brought to his study of documents a profound knowledge of the realities. That is why his work still shines beyond all the rest.

I am no Parkman, but for many years I have tramped the Nova Scotia forest in summer and winter, hunting, fishing and exploring; and if my historical writings have any virtue it is because I have carried my own pack and rifle, sweated over portages with a canoe on my back, often bivouacking in the open; because I know the feel of snowshoes underfoot and the weight of a deer carcass on the shoulder; because I have spent much time and talk with the Indians and other country folk whose tales carefully passed down from generation to generation, fill in so many of the gaps in the history books.

In the writing of "Roger Sudden" the most interesting job was field research at Louisbourg. The ruins of the old French fortress are now a national park, three miles away from the modern town over the worst road in Cape Breton. It's a grim and lonely place, especially in foggy weather, and I lodged with the caretaker of the museum, whose family are the sole inhabitants. Wet days I pored over the maps and documents in the museum, fine days I spent tramping the bush in a wide arc about the old town and the bay, hunting up the traces of Wolfe's and Amherst's roads and trenches and redoubts and camps. The land is all rock and bog, so that the trenches were really breastworks of stone; and the eternal rock was used for roads and forts and hut foundations, a fine thing for posterity—you can search the bush behind Louisbourg (a tangle of scrub forest now as it was then) and find these permanent traces of the siege precisely as the old records describe them. Often a thicket of spruce conceals a whole redoubt, and you cast back and forth like a hound in the undergrowth, maybe for an hour, before you strike the mossy piled stone breastwork just as Wolfe's rangers or Amherst's redcoats left it in 1758. It requires an eye for ground and it has all the thrill of detective work—to me, at any rate.

I spent many days at this, mostly for the sheer joy of it, because obviously I could not use the mass of material in a normal-sized novel; but I like to think that all this going over the scene produces authentic secondary effects in the writing—a sixth sense if you like—which an author can acquire no other way. Every evening just at dusk, rain or shine, (usually fog) I made the circuit of the ruined ramparts, strolling along slowly and alone. Deer come out of the woods at that time of day to nibble the lush grass and weeds in the ancient moat; it was a dull stroll that didn't flush two or three, and sometimes there were a dozen or more, making off across the old zone of fire with rocking-horse motions, the white flags disappearing last in the grey light. Foxes come out of the woods, too, by night, and raise the devil with the caretaker's chickens.

But it was in these lonely walks on the ramparts, with the sea fog drifting mysteriously over the ruins and the gulls crying, that I saw Sudden and his fellow characters thrown on my mind like a film. I'm not trying to sound romantic. This is the thing I've found all my writing life. If you soak yourself first in the documents, and then in the actual environment, sooner or later the characters suggest themselves, and talk and move, and all you have to do is write them down.

As you have noticed undoubtedly, the siege of Louisbourg in 1758 was the first historical sample of "combined operations" as we know them today, carried out in the modern manner, even to the use of rangers for "commandos"; the only differences are in the weapons, ships and tools. The prin-

(Continued on page 8)

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DISCOUNT TO DISCHARGED VETERANS—SPECIAL TUITION RATES FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

(Continued from page 6)

ciples are fundamental, after all. That's why great sea powers like the British Empire and the United States should never forget their history, which holds such useful lessons.

GORDON MACCREAGH, whose "Lion Trouble" opens this issue, appends the following remarks anent the "Dark Continent" variation of the Dracula legend—

Leanthropy—the belief in were-lions—that's a good word to start with. Allied to *lycanthropy,* it is the African phase of a universal and very ancient world belief.

Lycanthropy, most of you all know, is the belief in were-wolves, as *diphyllanthropy* is the the belief in vampires. The very names make them mysterious. Basically, all these superstitions are built on the supposition that certain people, under certain conditions, are able to take the form of animals and go around preying on the neighbors.

The were-wolf and vampire beliefs were universal all over Europe as late as the beginning of the last century; they are still current in the mountain villages of Italy, Greece, Rumania, Russia. All of which doesn't make them authentic, of course. But anybody who cares to dig into the literature of the subject will find some astoundingly authentic sounding material—court records and so on—about the neighbor shooting at the wolf by the dark of the moon on the 7th or 9th night, and their multiples, of the month and the wicked old man of the village having the pellets in his leg the next morning.

In Africa, accordingly, where there are no wolves, they have were-lions, were-hyaenas, were-this-and-thats, according to local fauna. They have also court records—not a hundred years old, but as late as six years old—of somebody shooting at such a beast and the police picking up the local witch doctor with the bullet in his last part over the thorn fence.

Yes, yes, the shooter was short-sighted and nervous and he just thought the guy looked like a hyaena or a lion in the dark. But there comes a record out of Portuguese East Africa of the local white man killing the witch-lion and having it carried into a hut for skinning in the morning—and in the morning finding the suspected bad man dead in the hut.

All right, all right, they're all liars; all the records; all the white folks, amongst them, priests, who say they have seen these things. And I'm no evangelist, going around converting people.

But this much about were-lions I know, and most missionaries and officials know: that certain wild-eyed African brothers belong to cults, headed by some spellbinder who knows the magic formulae; and that, upon certain occasions, they go through a ceremony of drums, mystic drinks, and blood baptisms that puts them into a condition of auto-suggested hysteria in which they *believe* they have become lions and go around acting like lions in every way; acting like them to the extent of killing the marked victim.

Details of the ceremony have never been witnessed by any white man. Of preliminaries I vouch for this much: Such a ceremony must have, first, the fresh blood of a lion—for the baptism; its liver, brain, and leg sinews go into the soup that with magic herbs, constitutes the potent drink. Amongst the herbs are *enkhlovidi* tree bark, that has a hypnotic effect, and the dried pseudobulbs of an orchid (angraecum) that acts like cocaine "snow." Just as the European pharmacopeia of a century ago contained toads and vipers in recipes for melancholia; so the witches brew for a lion-making contain whatever other fantastic mucks the local African mind can think of.

Whatever the exact process, the *result* is authentic. Those men come out of the ceremony convinced that they are for the time being lions; and they will do anything that their observation has shown them a lion will do.

So, too, hyaena men. Infinitely more loathly; for they will go out and do whatever they know hyaenas to do. Hyaena men will actually go out and dig up graves—and old enough, at that, so you can smell them a hundred yards down wind. This, I have seen. I do not vouch, as a good priest told me he had seen, for the fact that they do this in the company of real hyaenas; although I find it perfectly possible to believe that a bold and hungry hyaena might well hang around and rush in to grab his mouthful.

Lion men and hyaena men must not on any account be confused with leopard men. The leopard cults have nothing mystic about them. They are no more than secret societies who do their stuff masked and hide-gowned just as did the old Ku Klux Klan. Much of their stuff is salutory; such as the tearing up with steel claws of some local Scrooge whom tribal law or white-man police cannot touch. A leopard society lesson doesn't always mean a killing. Many a big bully boy shows the four-claw swipe of scars across his twin buttocks or his chest in V form and invents himself a good story of the furious fight he had with a leopard that got away from him.

Officially, however, leopard societies—as also Ku Kluxers—are suppressed, since the LAW likes to arrogate to itself the right to all salutory punishment.

To return to lion men. An aspect other than the auto-entranced cultists who believe they are lions, is the theory that certain adepts of thought projection can *send* their own spirit into a real lion and can thus direct it to do certain things. Is this fantastic, incredible? Consider. There's many a wild animal trainer who insists that

(Continued on page 140)

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LION TROUBLE

By
GORDON MacCREAGH

ANYBODY could see that the lion was mad—even that colonel of AMG Intelligence, who knew everything that everybody did and said and thought in ex-Axis Africa, but who knew nothing about Africa.

He said, "Sergeant, I'm inclined to think that brute is angry and is about to attack us. Look how he's stamping back and forth on his rock pile. And the way he coughs."

Sergeant "Tembo" Neale never liked these assignments of nursemaiding important officials around the hinterlands of Africa while they wrote their formal reports about the unrest that remained rampant in the wake of Allied occupation. That occupation had been too hurried for a complete mopping up of old-timer settlers who knew where to hide out and were making a profitable business out of the chaos that a war leaves behind. Many an embittered man could do the simple calculation that, if he could set fire to a supply dump and steal a case of canned goods in the confusion, the profit was all his and the loss was that of somebody else whom he didn't like anyway.

Tembo Neale's face, which looked as though he had carved it himself out of an acacia knot, cracked a little in the heat. He said in a wearily sardonic tone, "You *think* he's angry? Watch him. Inside of the minute by your wristwatch, he'll start cat-footing down the rocks and when he reaches the grassland he'll up tail and come like a skip-bomber." And belatedly he added, "Sir." His own induction had been too hurried to have permitted the implanting of all the military niceties.

The colonel said, "Well, I suppose you can stop it, if what our files say about you is true. Or do we have to make for the nearest tree?"

The crack in Neale's face closed up again.

"The trees," he said disgustedly, "will all be acacia cornuta around this scrub plain. Thorns that would rip the hide off a chacma baboon. Yeah, I can stop it—even with a Service stock model."

The colonel knew everything about Tembo Neale. He was therefore sufficiently reassured

about the angry lion less than three hundred yards away to find time for a certain asperity in upholding a military credo.

"The American Army stock model, Sergeant, is the best military rifle in the world."

Neale's wooden mouth was obstinate. "It was," he said, "before the brass-hats back home adopted the Garand automatic and then had to revert to the old ammunition load because the Garand couldn't stand the pressures of the new. At three hundred the circle of error with this thing will be six inches. But O.K., I can stop it— if we *want* to stop it."

Although the colonel knew everything about Tembo, he could never understand the man. He looked at him as at something out of a different world—which, as a matter of fact, he was. This Tembo belonged in a world very different from any that the colonel had known before a war came along and gave him a nice rating in Allied Military Government because he was a veteran of another war. Tembo, on the other hand, had been in Africa long enough to have won himself a native name. "Tembo" meant Elephant, and had something to do with poaching. The colonel knew this and thought, unofficially, that it must take a good man to poach elephants.

He stared now at Tembo and said, "But for great crazy Mike's sake, Sergeant, why wouldn't we want to stop a brute that is about to attack us, stranded, as we are, without a car, afoot?"

"Ye-ah," Tembo said absently, his eyes narrow and very wary on the far lion. "I think it was *meant* to attack us, all right. And that's question number two—number one being the happenstance of the jeep's breakdown. But it will come on those natives first."

"What natives?" The colonel's anxious gaze, divided hitherto between man and lion, snatched time to look over the rolling, scrub-grown plain. "I don't see any natives."

"They were topping the farther rise an hour back—you could see a sun-flash now and then on a spearhead. They ducked into the *donga* when they spotted us. And that's question number three: Why did they duck if they didn't know something about all this funny business? So I'm wondering if some lion trouble wouldn't be good for the treacherous monkeys?"

"Good Lord!" And the colonel repeated it, breathing it out hard. "*Good—Lord!*" And then his normal reactions asserted themselves. "It's coming!" he shouted. "Look at it! It's—

ILLUSTRATED BY EDD ASHE

The lion jumped ten feet straight into the air and landed in the thorn tangle.

Shoot, you fool! Don't stand there just looking at it!"

Tembo Neale shrugged. "O.K.," he said. "You're the boss." The shrug was a part of the motion of throwing the rifle butt to his shoulder. The lion had taken enough of its bold, belligerent survey and was commencing with soft, feeling paws to slink, low-bellied, from its rock pile.

"I hate to shoot cats," Tembo grumbled through lips twisted with the pressure of the stock on his cheek. "They're harmless, usually. Unless somebody sicks them onto a man."

THE Colonel had no time to question so mad a statement as that last. Tembo's shot broke the exclamation that was starting from his lips. The lion jumped ten feet straight up into the air, came down with loose paws and disappeared into the thorn tangle at the base of the rocks.

There was the momentary hush that always follows a shot in Africa; and then there came a far shouting and a cluster of black figures scrambling and prancing up the rocky slope. The colonel let go a long tight breath.

He said, "Phe-ew! Shooting, Sergeant! And —er, sorry about that 'you fool' break just now."

"Didn't hear it, sir," Tembo said. "Now you watch those natives. If it's a plain, ordinary lion and they're innocent peasantry, they'll dance and yell and ruin the hide with a hundred spear holes, and then they'll bring the rags here and kiss your boots."

"My boots? Why mine?"

"Because the underground was buzzing already before we left Fort Dane that a boss man was making a tour."

The far black figures clustered about the beast that lay hidden in the brush. They seemed to be looking at it and then at each other, though at that distance all that could be clearly distinguished was stooping figures. Then they suddenly scrambled away as though a dead lion was something to be afraid of. They dropped back into the *donga*, the dry erosion gully, and were gone.

"Aa-ah!" Tembo said. "As innocent as monkeys! So I'm ready to bet, sir, that you came here for more than just inspection reports and some old-timer colonial knows plenty—enough to pay a lion-wizard to put the mark on you."

The colonel had been staring at the place of the disappearing natives as at a phenomenon. Now he turned to stare at Tembo as if the latter were some exponent of black magic —though subconsciously his mind circled about military technicalities. His eyes traveled over Tembo's uniform, undecorated except for its feathery patterns of dust. "How is it you don't rate sharpshooter?"

Tembo's face remained wooden. "I never had time to take in any of those games. I was picked out of my civilian job as a guide here and put on an Army rating on the same job and"—he added sardonically—"on army pay. As your files already know."

The colonel changed the sore subject. "What are these mysterious three questions you were talking about?"

"No mystery, sir. It's just that somebody around these backswoods doesn't want to be investigated and he's smart enough to play in with the witch doctors. So he'd have no trouble in getting some native to unscrew a bolt on your jeep, and then he'd just figure that it ought to be around hereabouts that the oil would be churned out and we'd be on the hoof and easy killing. The lion man here would be just one of the cards in his deal."

"You're still talking riddles. What is a lion man?"

"A lion man? Doesn't your office have a file on that? That's *jini-wa-simba*, lion-wizardry. It's something like werewolves in the more savage parts of Europe—only here, of course, it's lions. Some of these wizards are supposed to turn themselves into lions. The smarter boys who've been to mission school won't altogether swallow that, but they'll take the mission teaching about spirits entering into people and twist it around to believe that a wizard can put his spirit into a lion and then 'send' the beast around to get somebody on whom he puts the mark. It's called a lion-sending."

"Good heavens!" The colonel's eyes dilated on Neale again. "Don't tell me you believe that?"

Tembo stared at the far spot where the lion had been. He shrugged. "I don't know. Why would an ordinary, inoffensive lion want to attack anybody nearly a quarter of a mile away, in mid-afternoon when it's not even feeding time? Why would those natives leave it like a tabu and run?" Tembo frowned with his speculations. He looked back to the colonel as though an answer lay ready. "They say you can tell a witch lion by its having a black chin instead of white."

The colonel blinked his stare away from Tembo. "We can go see."

Together they tramped over the stiff tussocks of bunch grass which made the three hundred yards more of a chore than three miles of the rough wheel tracks that were called the road between Fort Dane and Mai-Duprah airport. The *donga* was a sixty-foot-deep gash in the pebbly red clay, scoured by the torrents of a thousand rainy seasons. The bottom of this hot tunnel was level white sand which showed the footprints of natives. But these marks were already drifting over, as if the breeze were deliberately covering up any information of African doings.

The scramble down and scramble up left both men in a sweat bath. Just ahead of them they could see great white-winged vultures already wheeling, descending to remove all other evidence.

The lion had been clearly hit between its round ears. The colonel's eyes lifted slowly from it to meet Tembo's stare. Tembo's grunt broke the silence.

"Of course, it doesn't prove anything. A black-chinned lion need be no more of a freak than a black leopard. But I'll tell you only this that I know about lion men because I've seen it. A *jini-wa-simba* does his mumbo-jumbo—drums and chants and stinking drinks and all that—and his converts get sort of hypnotized into a trance in which they believe they have become lions. They roar and slink around and growl over chunks of meat. And he can sure enough 'send' *them*, by golly, to tear up somebody he's put the sign on."

THE colonel's attention went involuntarily to his own limbs, whatever he could see of himself, as though he might detect some mystic mark. Tembo offered a more familiar analogy.

"Like the leopard cults of the rain forest country—using steel claws, you know. Rip a man's tripes out and drape 'em on the village thorn fence as a warning to peasantry to watch its step about whatever doings are in hand." He looked sideways at the colonel. "Like prying around into somebody's racket."

The colonel's face twisted away from the thought. Tembo added to the African fantasy.

"And they have hyena men, too—*jini-wa-gibi*. Not as dangerous as lions, but the wizard sure puts the bee on them, 'cause they're a lot filthier."

"You mean—" The twisted lips become a grimace with the quick swelling of the throat.

"Sure 'nough. The *wa-gibi* will dig up graves at night."

"Good incredible Lord! The things they do not teach us about Africa when they train us for these jobs!"

"That's nothing incredible for Africa. The hard one to believe is that they're supposed to run around with honest wild hyenas, who wait while they lift the heavy rocks off the mound. Though that last is another one I won't swear to at first hand."

The colonel transferred his nauseated stare back to the lion. "And so you are thinking our clever saboteur agent has had some *jini-wa*-whatsit put his sign on us?"

Tembo gave his shrug and short laugh. "I wouldn't bet on, or against, any queer thing in Africa. All I'm thinking is, there's a chance we could be night-raided before we foot-slog it to Mai-Duprah."

"You certainly take the possibility damned coolly, Sergeant."

Tembo's eyes held the colonel's, watching for their expression. He said slowly, "It's not me they're after. I'm no high chief of Intelligence who can get a subversive agent stood up before a dobe wall. I'm just a guide, snatched up and shoved into a uniform. There's a hundred like me around. Everybody knows I'm harmless."

The colonel's expression gave no satisfaction. He said, "How far do you figure it to the airport?"

Tembo looked up into the sky as though to read mileage there. His lips turned grimly down. "Sixty miles. And it don't help us any to see planes going by at ten thousand, due to land in thirty minutes."

The colonel, too, looked up toward the high drone of motors, followed the plane all the way to mosquito size. When at last it faded into the dust haze, his decision had come.

He said to Tembo, "You know how to live off the country, don't you? I mean, waterholes, shoot your meat, native huts, and so on?"

Tembo nodded. "I had to do it before the luxury of Army rations came to Africa."

"Very well, then," the colonel said. "If this saboteur is as smart as all that, he's important enough for us to damn well stick around a while and see what we can do about him."

Tembo looked at this beribboned colonel, still neat and military, thought sweat-grimed after a half day afoot. It was his own expression that changed. He said, "If I may say so, sir, you've got your guts."

"You may." The colonel grinned. "And, coming from as disrespectful a soldier as you, I'll take it as a compliment."

Tembo Neale was developing the feeling that there were things that Intelligence had not confided to a mere sergeant; and with his independent unfamiliarity with Army red tape he felt that if he had to shepherd this colonel into risks that the all-wise office did not know about, he, Tembo, ought to know why. He put it flatly up to the colonel.

"Just who are we going after? You didn't come to jeep between airports just to inspect landing-field conditions."

The colonel studied the man who could guess so shrewdly. He decided to disclose some of the sacrosanct secrets of his office. He grinned at Tembo again.

"To tell you frankly, I don't know. And frankly again, there is a lot more sabotage going on than anybody outside of our office has been told. We know only that it is well organized. The tools who do the damage are natives or ostensibly peaceful aliens. The mind behind it all must be some irreconcilable white man. And, at that, one who will keep up his game long after the war is all over, be-

cause in addition to the damage he does, there's a lot of loot in it. And he is dangerous because the war has taught him that a mere man's life isn't worth a dime."

Tembo's eyes scowled across the horizon of parched landscape. "Hmm! And, like I said, a man who knows his way around enough to play in with the witch-doctors. Sir, that kind of a man is going to be hard to get—before he gets you."

"Before he gets *us*," the colonel corrected him. "Because I have an idea, Sergeant, that when, or if, he gets me, you won't be running away."

The sergeant looked at his officer from under the frowning brows.

"Which I'll have to take as a pretty gloomy compliment. O.K., then. We're the makin's of a front page for the li'l ol' hometown newspaper. 'Two intrepid Yanks on foot against Africa.' Or for the nut-house news. All right, you're the boss. . . Overnight sleeping will be the first chore for this boy-scout picnic." He was staring into the sky again. "There'll be a village about four miles nor'west—and, if the cards aren't stacked, maybe some information."

"How do you know? Our files said that you had never been in this section before."

Tembo's frown cracked across his lower face. "Looked me up pretty thoroughly, yes?" He pointed to high specks that were not planes. "The buzzard patrol. Africa's signal corps."

CHAPTER II

THE "SENDING"

WHAT would have been a pleasant stroll anywhere else was now a stiff late afternoon's hike over African bunch grass with just enough low mimosa scrub thicket to double the distance. Anybody within a mile of it could have found the village without the vultures that wheeled like spotter planes. Neale's nostrils wrinkled into the hot wind.

"Here's Africa where white-man influence has never put over the idea of K.P." When they were within a hundred yards, the whole village was aware that strangers were coming. An army of lop-eared dogs barked in a frenzy of hate and suspicion. Neale stopped to cut a couple of knobbly mimosa branches.

"African dogs never like white-man smell. We'll have to fight our way through 'em."

The first outlying hut was a pattern of the template on which all the rest had been made: a thatched beehive of mud and cattle dung, with a hingeless slab door that fastened inside with a bar. Desiccated banana trees half shaded it. Blackened peels and other refuse littered the ground in an arc as wide as they could conveniently be thrown. A low mud wall built onto the rear was the goat and cow byre—empty.

The two men proceeded through a storm of dogs and dust. The animals' clamor was punctuated by the yells of those that nipped too close at heel, within reach of the sticks.

"And hydrophobia," Neale remarked, "is here all the time."

Other huts differed from the first only in that the garbage was fresher. Darker shadows within the doorways showed that the occupants had retreated to their holes until they should know just what was what. Three huts joined by a mud wall indicated the dwelling of some sort of a head man. Nobody came to offer as much attention as common curiosity would warrant. Neale muttered, "Not so good," as he strode to the nearest doorway and shouted, his voice muffled in its dimness.

From another doorway a man came out, mop-haired and spindle-legged, his body hidden under a faded cotton print sheet that had been smeared with repeated treatments of goat milk till it was as waterproof as a rubber sheet. His face was as dully heavy as one of his own oxen. He went through the gestures of preliminary hospitality. He shouted over his shoulder. Women ran out with brush switches and attacked the dogs with blows and shrill yells. The dogs out-yelled them and, seemingly understanding their job was done, scurried to bark querulously from behind their home huts. Other women brought three-legged stools for the white men.

Neale said to the man, "*Jambo Baba.* We request the customary shelter for the night—the guest hut, food, water." And he added, "For which we pay money."

The headman's face took on the blank expression that is the mask of Africa. He said, "It is a grief that travelers came earlier and the guest hut is now full."

Neale's eyes narrowed down. He said, "Very well then, any empty hut."

The man said in the flat monotone which always accompanies the mask, "There is no empty hut. There was a sickness in the neighboring village, so all the people of that village came here till the evil spirit of that sickness should go away. My village is therefore full."

Neale's jaw muscles swelled over his clamped teeth. Through them he repeated to the headman the native proverb, "'The baboon drinks lies with its mother's milk.' The very first hut is empty, by reason of the fact that its refuse is old."

The headsman's mask never changed. With the same placid shamelessness of an ox he said, "If it is empty it is unknown to me."

Neale gave the colonel the gist of the negotiation, ending, "So that's how the cards lie. They've already been tipped off the mark is on you. Probably the whole district has had

the word." He barked his sardonic laugh. "Sixty miles over there you have all the modernity of a transcontinental airport. A couple o' hundred miles to the west is an emergency field with guards. In between is Africa."

"And pretty crude-smelling, at that," the colonel agreed.

"As crude, pretty nearly, as before the white man came. Hardly scratched by its colonial government even before the war because there's nothing here that anybody wants. And all that the war has done is knock the skids from under the old white-man prestige that was often as good as an armed guard. Africa has learned that a white man can be killed just as easy as a black."

"You think that this 'mark' you speak of means that simple villagers like these will have the courage to gang up on us?"

"LOOK, sir." Neale expounded the dark law of Africa. "When a witch-doctor sells a killing, somebody dies. He's got to, or the doc goes out of business. Ordinarily these spellbinders have laid strictly off of white-man affairs—that's how they haven't been exterminated by white authorities. But when the old authority has been chased out and the new has taken so little hold that a witch doctor is bold enough to sell out against a white man, my say is we'd better admit we're scared and run. We're two of us alone against the blank wall of black Africa. We'll get no help, we'll dig never a word of information. Every black man in the country will be monkey-dumb and monkey-cunning enough to heave a spear at our back. So the white man had better hurry up and hike sixty miles to Mai Duprah and sleep in trees and come back with an army."

"If we come back with any kind of a force," the colonel insisted doggedly, "this saboteur, or gang of them, will do just as they did while the campaign was pushing through this territory. They'll just lie low till we're gone. The only way to catch them is when they're active. And our job, Sergeant, is to find out and suppress fifth column activity."

Tembo Neale grumbled his old complaint, which was not without its logical basis. "Yeah, it's nice interesting work when you can get it. The difference, sir, is that I've got to stick my neck into it on a sergeant's pay."

The colonel only grinned at him and softly quoted a current plaint of more than one GI caught up in the confusion of a war. "It ain't what you know, Sergeant. It's who you know."

Neale's dour expression had to crack. "Oh, all right," he grumbled. "All right, then, we'll sleep overnight in that first empty hut. And if we get out alive without some filth disease,

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we'll make plans tomorrow for bare-handed safari. Us with one rifle and your officer's side arm. The Rover Boys!" To the dull-faced headman he said, "Listen to my word, son and father of baboons. Send food and water to that first hut—and let it be surely before dark, for in this jackal's nest we don't open to voices of the night."

The hut stank of long desiccated relics of African use. There was, of course, no furniture—there never had been any, other than sleeping mats. Neale made a quick inspection along the circle of wall and mud floor for scorpions. Then he particularly inspected the heavy slab of inch-thick acacia that stood beside the oblong opening of the doorway. He stood at the door and looked out across the dusk landscape. Then he went out and did a quite mad and unnecessary thing.

Some fifty yards from the hut a snake bird squawked its tin-can note preparatory to selecting a roost in an impenetrable tangle of thorn. Neale walked idly over and threw a brass rifle cartridge at it. The bird, of course, flew away; and then Neale spent the remaining minutes of daylight hacking a tunnel into the thorn tangle with his bayonet to retrieve the cartridge. He came back spinning the thing in the air and catching it.

Food had arrived. An asteopatous woman of unmistakable bushman heredity brought some blackened clay pots of something that steamed and a calabash of water. With all the rapacious artlessness of a civilized bellhop waiting for a tip, she stood around. Neale told her a forceful word that sent her screaming with indignation into the dark. He brought the food into the house.

"These," he told the colonel, "we shall very carefully *not* eat."

"Huh?" the colonel's eyes dilated. "You think—"

"Everything I think about this set-up is bad."

"The devil! Well, what do we eat?"

"We eat," Neale grinned with malice, "a couple of notches in our belts. We're living off the country."

The darkness remained long silent with each man's thoughts. The short equatorial afterglow cooled like a hot stove-lid. Heitsi Eibib, the great nature god, reached red fingers over the horizon and pulled the disk of the sun under to cook his evening meal on it. Stars ran out from the holes that he had made for them with his forefinger in the sky to give them shelter from the sun while he was not using it. Neale sniffed out into the decaying smells of the night.

He said, "Guess this is dark enough. So now we'll prop the door like it was locked and we'll sneak out to my tunnel in the thorn patch and maybe see how innocent this town is after dark."

"The thorn patch? Is that why you did that? I thought the sun had hit you. But then, why did you insist on this hut?"

"Bait," Neale said enigmatically.

"Good Lord! Won't it be sort of dangerous?"

Neale grinned sourly. "This is a hell of a time, sir, for you to think about this chore being dangerous."

"I mean, lions—or something, out in the open like that? I thought you had to build a high thorn corral?"

Neale's grin tightened down very grim. He said, "Ye-ah, I've an idea there will be just that. Lions."

He helped the colonel to back into the thorn-bush tunnel and squirmed in beside him. In the darkness they might have been a pair of warthogs at the entrance of a stolen ant-eater burrow, bristling defense and sniffing their suspicions of the night.

THE colonel shuffled painfully as the murderous bull-horn thorns punctuated his every move. "Damn it," he growled. "Aren't you letting your suspicions run rather wild, Sergeant?".

"Could be, sir. All that's happened yet is just little stuff—the jeep out of oil, the natives running away from a dead lion, the headman lying about an empty hut—but it adds up. And why all of it in a heap? When a witch-doctor is in on a play, I'm suspicious of everything."

"But you don't know that there is any witch-doctor. You're just guessing."

"Yeah. And if a sergeant guesses wrong he can lose a stripe. But anyway, sir, this is cleaner of cooties than the hut. And this is the quick way to make at least half a corral when some villager may be watching. Not that I like it. Though I know men who'll set out a bait and back into a bush and do their lion-shooting that way. Me, I'm scared of it—I want to be up in a tree."

"Liar!" said the colonel. And, irrelevantly, "This is a helluva place to try and sleep."

"Me," said Neale, "I'm not aiming to try. I'm going to watch and listen and—hey! Listen there! There it is!"

A low rumble came downwind, like far summer thunder—a curiously all-pervading reverberation, from exactly where you couldn't tell. It broke away in staccato coughs.

"That's the way they hunt. The game doesn't know where the sound is from and runs panicky—and Mamma Lion is waiting somewhere downwind."

The colonel tried to edge farther back into the tunnel and ouched as new thorns found him.

Another rumble made the air shudder, and quickly another one answered it, nearer.

"Mm-hm!" Neale muttered with incredible

satisfaction. "Quite a family of them! And now you tell me, sir—why isn't every dog in the village yelling its head off?"

A thunderous roar crashed out, seemingly just behind the hut.

"And why doesn't any lying baboon back there make a light, beat a drum, yell? Why doesn't the whole filthy village get up and raise hell? You know the answer. Because they are witch lions! And every African son of 'em knew they were coming for us and knows that he damn well hadn't better stick his nose into any of it, or he'll find his own guts strung like a clothesline across his cow pen."

The colonel's whisper came hoarsely. "But it's incredible! The thing is impossible! It's—"

A duet of roars was joined by a full chorus. Everywhere. The hut was enveloped in grumbling thunder. The colonel's hand caught at Neale's sleeve. A dim form was slinking belly-low towards the hut. The great breath of its snuffle at the door could be distinctly heard.

"Good impossible Lord!" The colonel breathed his disbelief.

The dim form melted into the farther shadow. It materialized again as two. They growled at each other. They fused in the dark, shadowy shapes among the shadows, and then they were suddenly at least five!

They circled the hut, patrolled it on soft-padding feet.

The colonel's grip on Tembo's arm was eloquent of all the words he dared not whisper. There must have been more than five of the great brutes. They snuffled at every crack in the hut's mud-smeared wattle and roared hungrily. Three of them suddenly rolled together in a fury of combat that shook the air with sound. In the dark one needed hardly any imagination to see the fur fly. The fighting, paw-batting forms rolled apart, the fight forgotten as suddenly as started. They prowled around the hut again, lifting heads to roar or lowering them to emit vast ventral moanings that vibrated along the ground with a baffling indefiniteness of direction.

This continued for an hour—and all the while, never a whimper from a village dog nor a shout from a human.

Neale leaned over carefully to whisper. "Cats with mice in a cage. And we're the mice—they think."

"Thank God, they haven't smelled us out."

"Wind's this way. And the hut stink drowns everything."

"They seem to be slowing up. What do you think they'll do now?"

"Bust into the cage and get surprise number one." Neale was able to make a sound like a laugh. "You want something to think about? Why can't we see their big yellow eyes?"

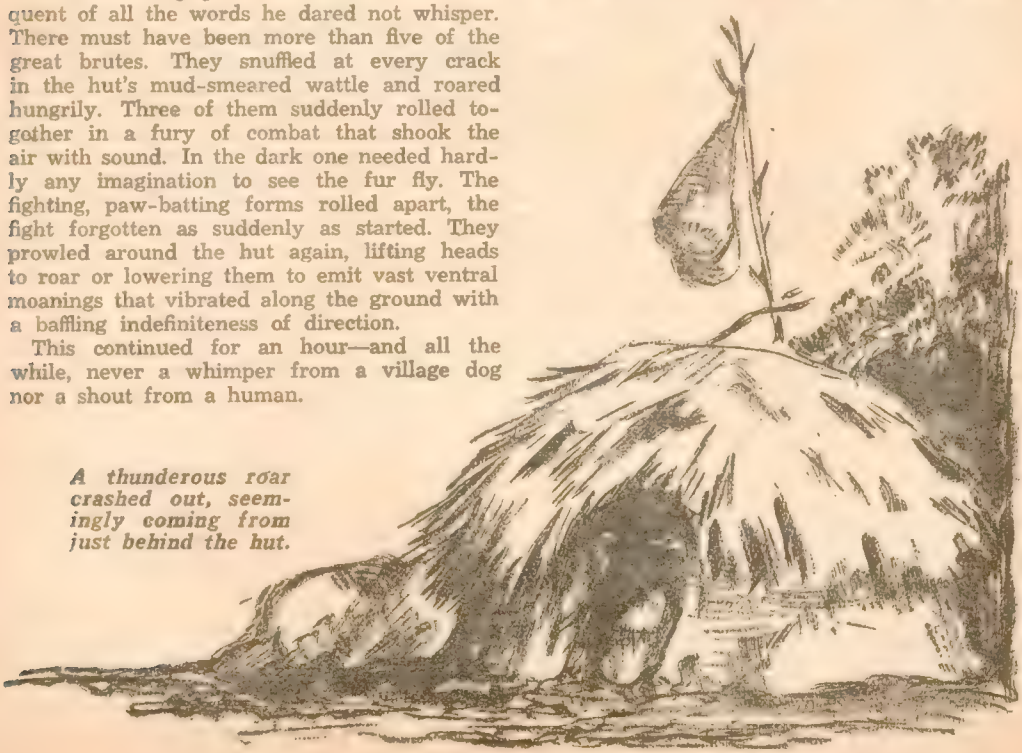
True, the prowling shadows were slowing up in their cat-and-mouse play. They congregated before the door. And then an indrawn gasp squeaked in the colonel's throat.

One of the shapes stood up on hind legs and put its hand to the propped-up slab.

"Good God! It—it's a man!"

"Yeah," said Neale grimly. "Or at least half a man, with all the attributes of a lion. I'd kinda almost be ready to believe there's a witch-doctor mixed up in this business. And these *wa-simbani* are the more dangerous because they can think—or at least, their boss can."

THE door slab pushed inwards under the man's hands. He let it drop and sprang back with the exact reaction of a surprised animal. The other shadows grouped in front of the door, and then with one accord



A thunderous roar crashed out, seemingly coming from just behind the hut.

they jostled each other to rush like animals into a cave where there was meat.

The colonel's long tenseness of anxiety was turning to rage.

"Well, damn their hides! If they're just black men pulling some play-acting on us, why can't— How many of them d'you think there are?"

"Not just play-acting. They're under the influence of the 'sending.' They think they're lions, they'll fight back with the courage of lions, and they've got great steel claws that'd rip you from gut to gizzard."

The shadows came out of the hut. They prowled short beats before the door making the exaggerated querulous mutterings of a cat whose mouse has got away.

Neale's rifle bolt clicked. He said, "You're the boss, sir. You tell me."

"But, good Lord, that'll show them where we are!"

"Lions will pretty nearly always scatter at shot." It was extraordinary how Neale persisted in regarding them as animals. "Unless one is wounded, and then that one will charge and keep coming until he's stopped."

An inhibition of civilization assailed the colonel. He said, "In cold blood?"

Neale grunted a sardonic sound. "The old white-man squeamishness, eh? We always pay for it in Africa, where the other fellow hasn't any. But these are only half men just now. They'll be snuffling around next to hunt us down like a pair of wildebeeste."

"Good Lord! I—I suppose then—"

"I hate to shoot cats," Neales grumbled. "But Mr. Jini-wa-Simba will have to know we're not just a couple of dumb white men and he can't pull wizardry on us without a comeback."

With the last word he fired into the dark. The prowling shadows responded exactly like cats. They were there and then they were not. A scattering of gravel was the only sound they left behind. It was impossible to distinguish whether a shadow that didn't move was one of them or was just a shadow.

The village remained as silent as any garbage heap. No human there was willing to intrude into the affairs of wizardry. The colonel, too, had nothing to express his surging thoughts of a fantastic Africa of which he had known nothing. His skin crawled in little prickles, listening for stealthy sounds in the bush. Every scuttling wood-rat in the dry leaves or scarab beetle rolling its dung ball was magnified in his mind to some furtive thing stalking the thorn tunnel from behind.

Neale said with extraordinary matter-of-factness, "I guess right here will be safest for the rest of the night. And then, sir, now that you've seen something of Africa that's not on file, there'll still be time to get out and hike for Mai Duprah in a hurry."

The colonel's reactions were returning to their normal doggedness. He said, "I told you, if we were to come back with reinforcements we'd lose all trace of this clever devil."

Tembo grated a laugh. "Lose all what trace of which devil? All we've found out so far is that a wizard is out to eliminate you, African style."

"But damn it all! We must be able to find out something more somewhere!"

"That's Intelligence Office thinking along white-man lines. Here's Africa, with every black man suddenly grown race-conscious on account of war propaganda that's tried to tell him just certain selected white men are his dear friends and the others are all his enemies. And if all natives look alike to some of us, all whites look alike to him. My bet, sir, is that we'll find out nothing nowhere—unless maybe we can buy in on some bigger wizard to play our side."

"Sergeant, I tell you, I'm not going to ruin all our chances by bringing reinforcements in here."

"O.K., then. O.K., sir. And I'll bet that my tripes on a sergeant's pay will look as good as a colonel's, hung out to dry on a thorn bush! So, then, with first light we'll have a nice hike all the way to the jeep."

CHAPTER III

JUNGLE HABARI

EVEN before the first light, Neale shook the colonel. The colonel's start rolled him onto a thorn that woke him very thoroughly. He yelped, "Huh? What? Are they coming back? Have I been asleep?"

"Like an innocent babe in the wood, sir. Come on, let's get out of here before we're seen. Leave these monkeys guessing. The jeep is a good five miles sou'west, if I hit my angle right."

The colonel rubbed the puncture of a thorn. "Why do we need the jeep? We can't run the damn thing without oil. And we already agreed there was no use sitting in it, waiting for something else to come along. Wheeled traffic doesn't pass between airports except for emergency supply."

"For just that," Neale told him. "If we're going boy-scouting in these back woods, we'll need supplies. I brought only two spare clips and some K-ration and two canteens, figuring a peaceful hike to Mai Duprah."

The colonel groaned over this new contingency. "Well, I suppose it won't be so knockdown and drag-out hot before sun-up."

But the sun was well up before they reached the jeep—and the next contingency was a knockout to their plans. Neale had uncannily found the exact angle through the brush to the

jeep that stood on the faint wheel tracks just where they had left it. And it had been very thoroughly looted!

Everything that could be wrenched off without tools was gone. Even the glass of the lamps.

Neale was swearing savagely as he scouted around the ground. "Some time before last night's dew. Tracks are like writing. Likely they'll lead us to some other village and, if that one too hasn't been tipped off the mark is on you, we may pick up some *habari*."

"What's *habari*?"

"The African underground. Drum talk. Bush telegraph. Whatever you care to call it. Everything that happens goes by *habari* and that's one thing the panicky censors can't clamp down on. Only people can stop *habari* is the witch doctors, and they can only stop it from getting to white men."

The colonel groaned. "How far, do you think?"

"Anybody's guess. I didn't note any other buzzards yesterday marking down the next village. This is nice, interesting work—on a colonel's pay."

The colonel was still able to grin. He said, "Inferior though a colonel may be to a guide, I'll stick it out, my brash Sergeant. Let's go."

As they went Neale lifted his scowl from a regular swath of a trail left by half a dozen quite stupid men whose very last suspicion had been that anybody would ever follow them from their looting. Neale said, "Well, I'll be damned!"

The colonel plodding behind him, said, "I know. But for just what this time?"

"I don't know—yet."

The sun was over the acacia tops, and was beginning to let them know that it was there and warmly interested in their doings, when Neale squinted up at it and said, "Damn right it's them."

"You're talking mysteries again. It's who?"

"Those same monkeys from last night's hotel. This trail heads right for under the same old buzzards. Right back to the old haunted house. We'll have to handle this with gloves."

They approached the village from a different angle this time. The dogs knew as though they had been told that their coming was not shrouded in witchcraft. They came in howling waves. Neale methodically cut clubs. They beat their way to the headman's huts. Neale had to shout as before, to bring him reluctantly out.

Neale wasted no time on formalities. He said, "I want the loot that was taken from the car."

The headman's expression was already the African mask. He said, "I know nothing of any loot or of any car."

Neale said to the colonel, "Better draw your gun, sir, and if you see any sun glint on a spear, shoot at it." To the headman, he resumed. "It is your great misfortune that the baboon who was your father left you no wit to know what happens in your village, for here is something that is more surely to your hurt than lions about an empty hut!"

His left hand flashed out to take a fistful of the man's ear. With his right he slapped the man across the face, slapped him backhanded with the return, and slapped him again.

The man howled and wrenched backwards. Neale could feel the creak of cartilage under his grip. He slapped the man again. Behind him he heard the colonel's gun go off. He never stopped to look. Back and forth he slapped the man. He transferred his hold to the other ear and kept up a methodical fury of slapping with his left hand, till the man's neck was limp and his knees sagged under him. Neale held him up by the other creaking ear. He propelled him away from his hut, pointed him to the garbage-littered space that was the road between huts. Like a dazed animal, the man stumbled ahead.

"And buy from your witch-doctor a charm to protect you from me in the future," Neale told him.

"Handle 'em with gloves," the colonel said.

Neale grinned crookedly. "African gloves. Watch out for spears."

NO SPEARS came. Not a face appeared at a dark doorway. Africa was wholesomely conscious of a man who knew Africa. The headman stumbled to a hut. He stood dumbly at its entrance, hating to advertise himself as an informer by going in, dizzily fearful of refusal. Neale shoved him into the dimness and stepped quickly after him before some slow-thinking mind could collect its wits for action.

A dark form stood beside the door, a spear in its hand. Neale made up its mind for it by kicking it instantly in the stomach. Under the thatch the hut was not too stiflingly hot, just moistly warm and smelling like a football locker room similarly without ventilation. A half dozen other dark forms huddled on the floor. Two of them were women.

"Tell them," Neale ordered the headman. "Not of your misfortune, for every one of them saw that. Tell them what I want."

The huddled forms put on the standard mask of oxen dullness. But, involuntarily, eyes rolled to an unnatural bulge under the sleeping mats piled along the wall angle. Neale's boot fairly lifted the nearest form towards it.

The colonel, his gun ready for some howling flare of resistance, said, "My sacred aunt! Your African gloves are somewhat rough."

"Yeah," Neale rasped. "But you'll notice we haven't had to shoot anybody yet. Get 'em on the run and keep 'em on the run. And if we dawdle here we'll have to shoot our way out of it yet—and here's hoping some of the boys haven't picked up a few of those good rifles that an army leaves so carelessly around the landscape."

The booted man dragged away the mats and uncovered a miscellany of articles.

"Ha!" Neale pounced on them. "Cartridges! Good! Rations—they haven't pawed them over enough yet to know they're eatable. Quinine—which we won't need in dry season. Chlorine tablets—which we damn right will, for waterholes. Canvas covers. Fine! That's about all we'll have to have—except a couple of clay cook pots. These we confiscate as a fine for thievery. And we'll need porters, two of 'em, for our boy-scout camp."

He applied his boot under the buttocks of a brace of hunkered shapes. "Up! Up! You baboons who were clever enough to steal may have wit enough to carry. We make safari at once! Collect your own *potio*, meal, millet, whatever you have. Quick, quick! We waste no time in this village of stenches."

Never had an African party got under way with such speed. The men babbled. They pleaded every possible reason for delay. Tembo drove them, bullied them, barked at their women.

But in unprecedented time, they collected their heaps of weevilly grain into cloths, rolled all into canvas, roped the bundles for head loads.

Within a half hour of entering the village, the two marauders were marching out behind two very wretched and bewildered black men.

Neale let his shoulders out and drew in a long breath. "Whe-ee-ew!" he said. "If you don't know it, sir, I was plenty scared. Give 'em a few more minutes and that village would have gotten itself together to rush us. Did you note those monkeys clustering at their doors and yelling to each other?"

The colonel said, "Yes, I've noticed that you scare easy. And I'm noting that the Allied Military Government of this territory is getting as high-handed as the former rulers ever were. Do you know what we've done, man? We have assaulted liberated subjects. We have imposed forced labor upon the populace. We have kidnaped the black brother right out of his home."

Neale grinned at him. "Yes, and there'll be complaints, because propaganda has told the black brother that our side is the good, kind fairy godmother come to deliver them. And the complaints will get to your headquarters and they'll be grown to atrocities backed up by fifty lying witnesses who personally saw you twist the arms off of little black babies, and worse. And you will have to write five hundred sheets of reports D-2 to K-19, to explain. It's all part of a colonel's pay."

The colonel gave him a malevolent look and growled, "Where do we go now for your next atrocity?"

"That," said Neale, "we plumb don't know. Your snake who strikes from the rear has been so smart that he's kept clear out of the picture so far. All we've had is native trouble."

"If we could catch some of the big shot's underlings—he must have some sort of an organization—perhaps we could induce some lower-down to talk on guarantee of immunity."

Neale vigorously shook his head. "That's white-man police thinking again, sir. This smart lad doesn't need any organization. All he needs is a brain to think up where there's some loot, and then he lets the natives do the dirty work. And you can't guarantee immunity because it's the witch-doctor who'll attend to squealers."

THE situation was the same old blank wall of secrecy that the white man has ever found when Africa does not wish to speak.

The colonel said, "Africa seems to be as modern as a close gangster outfit in any big American city. Only there we do now and then get a stool-pigeon who enables us to break the deadlock."

"Yeah, but not here. Your American stool-pigeons don't have to be scared of wizardry on their tail."

"So we are no farther than when we started. We've accomplished nothing so far."

"I wouldn't say that," Neale said wickedly. "I figure that saving a useful sergeant's life overnight is a pretty good play for our end."

The colonel said, "If this little trip lasts much longer, I'll be having to shoot a good sergeant in his sleep. So show some of this usefulness fast."

Neale said, "We might try some of the old psychology on our two Shenzies and maybe get at least a direction."

He barked an order to the two men who shambled ahead. They stopped like oxen trained to plow and turned.

"Watch their eyes," Neale said, and he told the men, "You are now far from your village. No man is witness of what you say. Tell me, then, what of a white man who lives somewhere in this neighborhood? What is this village?"

The two men clapped their hands to their mouths to shut in even the thought of such dangerous talk. They repeated the formula that they had been taught.

"We know nothing of any white man." But, as had happened in the hut, their eyes rolled guiltily towards the west.

"So that, at least, is a direction," Neale said.

"All right, the Rover Boys' safari heads west seeking adventure, and if the starch in our backs holds out under the sun, we may reach the coast in a few months."

At their rate of progress it would have taken a few years. The sun burned down on them; their shirts, which they dared not discard from their white skins, stuck over every square inch; their boots squelched with running sweat. Ahead of them the two porters, naked but for loin-cloths, remained as impervious as bush pigs.

"Early camp under the best tree at the first pretense of a waterhole," was Neale's advice.

"And that will save the life of a not so useful colonel," the colonel panted.

"Huh! Wait till you see the water," Neale grunted.

They plodded on. Every tussock of bunch grass seemed to have a hole behind it, and into each hole they stepped. Neale barked at the natives, who would have gone straight ahead. Over to the right a scrawny fig tree indicated water, at least for its roots. But it gave shade, with the careful conservation of nature, over a scummy pool. The colonel would have thrown himself on his stomach and lapped through the floating decay. But Neale yelled and dragged him back as if from poison. He told him the inexorable rule.

Tembo's left hand took a fistful of the man's ear and with his right he slapped the man across the face again and again.

"The Shenzies can drink it. But you and I would have amoebic dysentery before night. Chlorine tablets and stick it out for half an hour more is white-man fate."

He dipped a confiscated cookpot into the mess, spread his sweaty handkerchief over another pot and strained the dark brown liquid through. "And the lumps left over," he told the colonel grimly, "are only dung from gazelle that come to drink belly-deep. But it's better than any we might have brought from our hospitable village, 'cause that could easily have a squeeze of *muavi* root in it."

"Half another hellish hour! Oo-oof! And what's *muavi?*"

"It twists your belly into knots and you die in about three days, unless you know a friendly witch-doctor who'll give you an antidote—and we don't seem to be mixing friendly-like with any witch-doctors around these parts. Keep an eye on the Shenzies so they don't run away, and I'll go see if I can shoot us something to eat." He ordered the porters, "Make *boma* of thorn bush."

It was dusk again before he came back with a little duiker gazelle over his back. He threw it down and flung himself prone, gasping. "Goddlemighty, game's scarce around! But plenty of goat track. Some tribe must be migrating to less burned pasture. Any water there?"

The colonel had a potful, all strained and chlorinated. "I'm learning," he grinned.

"Ha! Life-saver!" Neale gulped it like purest ice-water. "Aah! Lukewarm dung tea. Not so bad, is it, when you want it bad? Whoo-oo! I'm plumb tuckered."

"Dee-lighted to hear it," said the colonel. "I was thinking you were made of hickory knots and I was lily-white chicken meat. Stretch out. I know how to burn lamb chops on a stick."

NEALE had the faculty, born of long necessity, of stretching out and taking his cat nap where he could. Before the black men had hacked the duiker apart with his bayonet, he was softly blowing bubbles of his water surfeit.

The colonel woke him. "Why didn't we think of salt?"

"We did. In my cartridge pouch. Kinder mixed with shells, but salt."

In a half hour the colonel was able to say, "I feel like two new men."

"What we need on this chore," Neale said pessimistically, "is six new men apiece." He dragged himself up to inspect the *boma*. It was satisfactory. In fact, the two porters had dragged up enough thorn bush to make a higher and stronger corral than he would have thought necessary—though to the colonel it seemed an appallingly inadequate fence, barely enough of a barrier to hold an active cow.

"Funny thing about lions," Neale reassured him. "They never jump *boma*—or at least, hardly ever. The famous lions of Tsavo learned how and took one hundred and eight railroad workers before they were stopped. But mostly they're too cat-suspicious of something they don't know."

"Sounds as safe as a hotel room," the colonel murmured.

"Anyway, we'll be able to sleep. These boys won't dare run away in the dark. Hai-i-iee-eow! Tomorrow's another jolly day of do the same thing."

But the morrow brought variety. They came upon straggling patches of goats which seemed to be wandering at will, nibbling whatever they could find. Presently, scattered herds—men could be seen, standing sentinel on one leg like lank, black cranes. Neale hailed one of them. The man came, with the sulky wariness of a native who has learned that a white man always means some kind of interference in his hereditary ways.

Neale told him, "I have nothing to do with a goat count or grazing tax. I look for a word of a white man who lives somewhere not too far."

He knew the answer before the man replied. He could see the whole process of composing the features from wariness to stupid stubbornness.

"There is no word of any such white man." And the oaf was stupid enough to add, "Nor of any wizard in this country."

Neale controlled his impulse to slap some information out of the man. He knew well enough that, while one might bulldoze a squeal about purely local thievery, witchcraft was a religion that controlled the superstitious by more than mere physical fear. He fished for information.

"It is of no importance," he told the man. "What *habari* goes through the land? Where do you go with your many goats?"

The man pointed in the westerly direction with his prognathous chin. "Over there, by the jungle fringe," he said, "is better grazing for our herds. Every season we go there, and when the rain comes we return to our village."

"Oho! So there's a jungle belt?"

"A half day far."

"What of waterholes?"

"Waterholes are more as the jungle is nearer."

"What *habari* of the jungle?"

"Of the jungle, none. But," the man chinned to the southwest, "*habari* is that fire ate up the place that is called Foteden, where the sky-carts sit down to drink. Many white men died and all the servants ran away."

"Fort Dane! Jeeze!" Neale left the man gawping and sprinted back to tell the colonel

the dire gossip. While the colonel was still good-Lording over it, he added his own interpretation.

"Your devil knows every angle of his business. Intelligence officer who came to investigate is marooned, and he hopes by this time festooned along a fence. So he manages to set fire to the gasoline dump—and I'll bet every black son hired as laborer ran away with as much as he could carry out of the confusion."

"Good God! Did he say white men were killed?"

"Yup. Tanks must have blown up, I suppose. And Benny Cusak and Hank Dolan were there—a lot of good guys! Damn the skulking sons of—" Neale swore himself into a fury of resolve that had remained lukewarm up till now. "Colonel, we've got to get that man!"

"You don't have to tell me that, Sergeant. That's what I came for. But where? We're wandering like baa lambs in the woods and everybody we meet is one of the wolf pack."

"The swine will have his hideout in the jungle belt somewhere, sure thing. It's all shaping that way. And the witch doctor, too. He'll have a nice wizard grove somewhere near by and they must work the racket together. Half a day, the herder says. If you can stick it out we'll be at jungle edge by nightfall, and then I'll find this sorcerer, by golly! I don't care who says anything about what."

"I'll stick." The colonel bit on his melting resolution. "Let's go."

CHAPTER IV

THE MAN TRAP

AS THE sun burned lower under their helmet brims, the country began to change. The open thorn scrub began to close in. Tree clumps began to be frequent: copals, silk cottons, tamarisks. For some strange reason of nature, rain was more plentiful here.

Neale mused on a phenomenon of his own observation in Africa—that while the people of the open country, pastoral folk, remained dull-witted, the people of the jungle had developed to a greater cunning, and it was there that the more diabolical aspects of superstition were found. Possibly, he thought, the exigencies of keeping alive in the jungle had perforce sharpened their wits.

The jungle stretched like a solid wall across the plain. The earlier trees had heralded it, but here it rose suddenly thick, as though cultivated and planted to a surveyed boundary line. Using his "psychology" trick on the natives, Neale decided that the way to head was north along its fringe. But now camp and rest were the immediate, urgent needs.

The porters grumbled for food. Capable, in their own circumstances, of subsisting on a skimpy portion of grain, natives conscripted into white-man employ, where meat was available, had capacity for gorging unbelievable quantities and then sleeping it off, if permitted. They had, of course, eaten all last night's little duiker. At home, they would have saved the intestines for a stew with yams; but traveling with white men, they had left these behind and clamored now for meat.

Neale certainly was not going out to shoot for them this late in the dusk; nor, callously, was he willing to share K-rations with them.

"It's not nutriment they want," he told the colonel. "It's just quantity. They've gobbled enough to hold them three or four days, but if anybody would hand it to them, they'd find room for as much again. I'll likely shoot 'em a monkey or something tomorrow if there's any luck, as there surely will be."

But next day the dark luck of Africa broke so that he didn't have to shoot a monkey. From somewhere a lop-eared dog appeared. While it remained warily aloof, it didn't go into the usual hysteria of barking. One of the Shenzies, almost slavering in his grin, called to it. Meat, over most of Africa, is meat. It is only the white man who has set up tabus against certain kinds of inoffensive meat.

The dog came half way, but held its distance, suspiciously sniffing the air, making up its mind whether or not to be friendly.

Neale's eyes narrowed at it. He caught the colonel's sleeve and whispered, as though the creature might overhear, "That pup! It's accustomed to smells other than pure black man!"

The colonel stared at it, as though it might suddenly sprout an identification collar and license. Without taking his eyes off it, he whispered back to Neale, "You mean, white-man smells?"

For answer Neale called to it. "Hai, pup. Here!" He clicked his fingers.

The dog backed away, ears cocked. The colonel dragged Neale back. "For Mike's sake, don't scare it. It may lead us somewhere."

"Yeah, if we can make friends. Only these cannibals think they're going to eat it. . . . Here, pup! Come, doggie! . . . Let's keep going, skirting the jungle edge. Maybe it'll tag along."

"It'll have to," the colonel said fiercely. "It's our first lead, sent by Providence. It must come along."

"Only that Christian Providence don't work in Africa, where a witch-doctor often knows enough to make his own."

But the dog trotted along behind, apparently satisfied that they were not hostile to it. And then suddenly it barked at the jungle.

A man was standing at the edge, barely distinguishable in the deep shadow. He stood much as the dog had stood—wary and ready to

The friendly little man recalled that there had been some story of a big witch-casting in the district.

bolt back into his shelter. Neale called to him. He came cautiously out into the sunlight. He was a furtive, ape-like little man with bright slits of eyes and a mop of ochre-dyed hair which looked like a burlesque comedian's wig and in which an ivory ornament stood out like a beacon. He carried a big bundle, not on his head, like the Shenzies, but over his shoulder on a stick. He seemed to understand the Lib dialect that Neale shouted at him. He came slowly forward, treading like a cat. Close up, it was very apparent that he was a much more intelligent type than the two porters.

He put on no mask of dullness when Neale put the paramount question to him. No, he said, without averting his eyes, he didn't know about any white man; but that was because he wasn't a resident of this district. He was traveling from his father's village—he pointed with his chin—to his father's brother's village —he protruded his lips in the other direction. He carried a gift of fish and *ducuru* cakes for his father's brother's daughter's marriage ceremony to his second-best woman's brother.

It was as involved as all simple people's relationships. *Ducuru* cakes, Neale explained, were kaffir corn and honey fried in kid fat, and were such good eating that they were served in every food shop from the Cape to Cairo—a fact unknown to Americans, who, in finicky horror of "germs," subsisted entirely on imported canned goods.

The porters immediately made moaning noises and pulled in their bellies to show gaunt famishment. Neale had no sympathy for them. But a more important thought occurred to him: The dog! The little man was already eagerly responding to the porters' demonstrations. If the white men were very hungry he would gladly trade some fish and mealy-cakes for a brass cartridge, or whatever the white men would give him. In fact, he would trade all his food, for he could catch more fish and many women could make mealy-cakes, while no woman could make a brass cartridge.

NEALE traded, and drew a moan from all three black men by offering a fish to so worthless a thing as a dog. The dog wolfed it down and wagged its tail.

"Eureka!" the colonel said. "We're friends! Now if we stick with it like its brother and keep feeding it, it may take us to the place where it learned white-man smells."

What, Neale asked this friendly little traveler, had he possibly heard about any powerful wizard in the district?

A wizard? The man screwed up his face in thought. There had indeed been some story of a big witch-casting some two seasons ago, but he didn't know much about that. His father's village was three days from here—out went his chin; and his father's brother's village— Neale cut his volubility short. The man was disappointed. White men were so impatient of gossiping a morning away. But, very well then, there was a path in the jungle here where he had emerged; and a trodden path must go somewhere, though he didn't know where because his father's village was—

Neale left him with a brusqueness that constituted unforgivable rudeness in African social relations. "Away!" he ordered the porters. "Up load! We stop and eat at mid sun. Till then we follow this jungle path. Fast now. There is no sun under the trees."

The porters moaned. The dog came hopefully along. It seemed to know the path. It trotted ahead, ranged in the undergrowth after the mysterious smells that dogs always find. The path was a dim tunnel of single-file width and twisted erratically to avoid enormous trunks of ceiba and ebony. Panga knife marks showed where men had slashed at encroaching vines. The heat of its windless interior was a sweat bath.

"It's well used," the colonel remarked. He whispered, unconsciously affected by the universal mystery of jungle that always oppresses one with the imminence of some monstrous thing just round the next dark turn. "D'you think we've got something at last? It'll lead to our quarry?"

The dog had disappeared into the underbrush after some toothsome scent or other. Not even

its snuffings could be heard. Both men called it in the most endearing voices they could produce. They looked at each other blankly, like men to whom a shining beacon had appeared only to be swallowed up by the sinister gloom of the jungle. Suddenly, noiselessly, the dog was on the path just ahead of them. Neale hurriedly gave it another fish to encourage the thought that food was with them rather than in the nowhere.

"I don't know," he answered the colonel's question. "My guess would be that a man as smart as this devil we're hunting wouldn't have his hide-out so well advertised. Though he might well be holed up a little ways off. And if we find him, what?"

"What d'you mean, what? Why, we'll—" The colonel didn't know what vengeance his official conscience would let him wreak on the spot.

"I mean, what'll we find? There'll be a white man maybe in a nice little clearing, say, with a mud and wattle hut a good deal bigger and whole lot cleaner than most. Likely enough living with a few women, natives. Some yams and corn planted. And what will we have on him? D'you think he'll be fool enough to have any of his loot in evidence? He'll be just an enemy alien who hasn't given himself up. So what?"

"Good Lord!" The colonel moaned as despairingly as did the porters about food. "How will we ever find out anything in this cursed country?"

"Find out? Find the witch-doctor first," said Neale grimly. "And assault that liberated subject till he squeals—if we have to shoot his whole damned bodyguard to get to him!"

"Would he have a guard? You mean, like any big gangster?"

"Not like a gangster. Witchcraft is a religion. So, like every big religious leader, he'll have his faithful disciples. What d'you think the lion men are? Pupils in his seminary, learning the business."

The dog had finished its fish and nibbled now for fleas.

"Let's keep moving and see what will be what. Come ahead, pup. You're the guide."

Anxious not to let the dog wander off again, both men pushed in front of the porters. "And don't you baboons think to run away," Neale warned them, and he bluffed. "For you cannot run so fast that a bullet will not overtake you."

The dog trotted contentedly ahead. They followed silently. Neale every now and then turned to keep an eye on the porters. He caught them in the act. He stopped in his tracks, undecided whether to run back and beat their heads together. Then he recognized the uselessness of it and just cursed them. "They're gobbling mealy-cakes, and dumb enough to hope we can't count."

AFTER a further silence, Neale expressed the result of his ruminations. "If it all leads to an innocent white-man hide-away, we—you, sir—can maybe persuade the guy that it's good business to talk. Any white man hiding out would know about other hide-aways and he wouldn't be scared witless to tell us where the local wizard's den is. And that's the guy who's the final authority. Without his influence our devil couldn't do any more than you and I, who can do nothing."

"Don't you think," the colonel hazarded, "that a path as well used as this would lead to where there is most business—and wouldn't that be the witch-doctor?"

Neale crowed delight. "Sir, you're learning. And a right likely lead that is, too. Only why is business so poor right today? We've met nobody."

The wretched dog found the answer to the mystery of the empty path. A little geyser of earth spurted and there was a whirring swoosh. The dog yelped once and its body spun in an arc through the air, as though hurled from a Roman catapult. Thin streamers of blood cometed from it as it flew. In the pathway a devilish instrument reared itself—a cluster of hardwood spikes set in a heavy block that still teetered on its strong bamboo spring, poised like some monstrous snake that hoped to strike again.

Neale's breath rasped inwards through his teeth. An instinct of precaution made him throw his arm out to stop the colonel, as if the damnable thing had not advertised itself enough. Neale's breath hissed out again.

"A man trap, by God!"

The colonel's military training recovered first from the shock. "What a devilish thing! And I thought that it was civilization that had invented the booby trap."

"Just our good luck that the unlucky mutt went first. Perhaps it's not hurt too bad." Neale turned back to look for the body that had hurtled over their heads, and then he was furiously swearing again. "Damnation! The Shenzies have sneaked out on us. Blasted fool that I was, I haven't kept an eye on them for the last quarter hour or so. Come on, we've got to catch them. We can't safari in this heat without porters." As they raced back along the path, he panted, "Shoot over their—heads. Scare 'em to—a stop and—kick 'em ahead of us the rest of the way."

The colonel found the porters. He was of a lighter build than Neale, and a better runner. He fell over one of them. The wretched man lay on his back, his knees drawn up almost to his chin. He was hideously dead. The other one's feet could be seen, grotesquely blended with the earth, protruding from the next bend in the path.

The colonel picked himself up, gasping from

the breath-shaking dive he had taken over the body.

"Aa-aa-ah!" The wail grated from Neale's throat. And then he was raving into the stillness. "Fool! Feeble-wit! Blasted silly grass-monkey, me! On *me* they put it over! The oldest trick in Africa. That damned cunning, too-innocent ape-man with his father's village fifty miles away! And I never saw through it! Brag myself to be a guide!"

The colonel had barely collected his wits after his fall. He was not following the self-denunciation. He was mumbling through bleeding lips. "What—what does all this frightful thing mean?"

"Mean? Goddlemighty, any fool but me could see it! The devils knew we were coming, had all night to find out about it while we camped. So they sent that clever stooge with his mealy-cakes! Poisoned fit to knock a buffalo." He knelt over the twisted bodies. "And this isn't *muavi*. *Muavi* takes days. This is nothing African that I've ever seen." He got up, his hard face visibly shaken. "Just our sheer white-man luck and nothing more that these poor fools had African appetites."

"Or maybe," the colonel said in awed monotone, "that Christian Providence."

"Aargh! You can't sell me any Christian Providence in Africa. It's just that the other fellow doesn't get all the luck all the time. This time it broke our way. And, by God, we're going to keep it breaking our way!"

"How? Come, get a grip on yourself, Sergeant. This thing has come so close to us. I'll admit it has me scared. I'm jittery. It's—Damn it, we're up against a hellish something that we can't come to grips with. We're alone and the whole country's against us. If you think, as you've been saying, that we ought to get out while we're still alive and return with an organized party, I'll be willing to concede to your judgment of conditions that I never dreamed existed."

Neale held a long breath and let it go through blown-out cheeks. His fury was settling down to a grim determination and vengefulness.

"I wouldn't say that now, sir. We're on the trail now, right on the hot trail. The luck is running our way at last, so I'd say let's run with it."

"How?" the colonel repeated.

Neale's attention had turned to the dog. "That poor pup! It was we who sucked him into it." It was queer how Neale's mind worked. "So d'you know what, sir?"

"What?"

"This path is it! This is where somebody an awful lot doesn't want us to go. So?" He looked his question at the colonel through hot eyes.

The colonel's face had lost its indecision. "So we go."

"Yes, sir! And now! And if any booby-trap catches me while I'm awake, it's my fault."

WITH as much caution as if traveling over mine-planted ground, the two men against Africa followed the path. Neale stopped at every new-cut shrub, at every vine that trailed across the road. Desperately slow going, but its desperate need was justified when Neale stopped before a thin filament that glistened against the foliage.

"Spider web, isn't it?" the colonel whispered. Everything he said was whispered in this sinister tunnel of green-filtered half-light.

"Yeah. *M'tuari* spider. Makes webs strong enough to catch birds. But I don't see any net across the path." Neale reached his rifle forward and pulled at the filament with the front sight. A little rustle came from the leaves beside the path at face height and a sliver of palm frond licked out and back and repeated with slowing speed till it quivered to a stop on its little bamboo spring. Its point was viscid with a gluey substance.

"Hmh! This one is new on me." Neale was beginning to take things with matter-of-factness again.

"This'll be blow-gun dart poison, I guess. One prick and a guy's got fifteen seconds left to say prayers. Only I've never heard of any people around here using blowing-guns. They belong down around Ituri forest. This is an improvement on the simple African trick of tying a snake to a bush. Somebody is helping the liberated subject out with bright ideas."

He beat the thing down with his bayonet and crept on. Somewhere ahead a hornbill coughed its cracked note of three syllables, repeatedly. Too repeatedly.

"Signals," Neale grunted angrily. "Giving us no credit for knowing a nature-faker. And that's how come there's no traffic on the road this gay morning. Everybody's been warned, 'Detour—closed for repairs.'"

Neale's lips, drawn away from his teeth, and the colonel's lower lip, bitten tight, showed the tension under which both men proceeded, expecting at any step some new trap devised by a brain more devilishly ingenious than the simple African's.

A heart-stopping hour of crawling and testing and listening gave a bare half mile of progress; and then Neale pointed to something white that glimmered above the path.

"Road to a wizard's parish house all right."

The thing was a skull, ingeniously arranged with light bamboo springs so that its teeth clicked together as it swung in the wind. The hornbill coughed in a fit that ought to have killed it.

"Now we'll be coming to all the 'keep off' signs—grass curtains across the road, V-for-

victory sticks pointing our way, spears in the path headed at us. When the high-binder is open for business the curtains are open, the stop signs point the other way."

But there were none of those things. Instead, a tall young man appeared suddenly in the path. Neale's rifle, under his arm, pointed immediately at the man's naked stomach. But

The dog yelped once and its bloody body catapulted through the air.

the man had no spear, only a polished staff without any blade to it. On his breast were painted two circles, each with a spot in the center.

"The lion eyes," Neale rasped. "Watch him."

The young man made no offensive move.

He spoke to them in a soft monotone chant.

"I am the mouth of the Great One. I speak the words of the *M'chawi-wa-tagati, Jini-wa-simba,* who speaks and there is rain, who makes clay dolls and men wither away, who sends his spirit into the night and smells out his enemies, who knows the little magic and the great magic, who is the friend of his friends, whose enemies die, Master of many disciples."

"Hmh!" said Neale. "A wizard of many angles, eh?"

The colonel had a suspicion that Neale was forcing a tough nonchalance to disguise the tautness of his nerves, which had taken the brunt of leading the way through that haunted path.

"My Master," the young man intoned, "offers a clear way from here on. He will speak with the white men who are stronger than some of the little magics."

"Whoopee!" Neale's relief broke in a yelp. "It always comes that way. Force the luck when it comes your way, and you'll hold it."

"Or it could be," said the colonel, "sheer guts that don't scare off too easily. D'you think it's on the level, or more treachery?"

"Your guess is as good as mine. I'm for following the luck. But I'll tell you, sir, my judgment is plumb biased right now. I'd follow anything rather than break trail along this hellish road."

"All right," the colonel decided. "We'll follow him. He can't take us to any worse than this."

"O.K., sir, and it's sure a relief to me. Watch out like a bush *bok* for ambush." He bluffed a grand callousness to the man. "We were coming to many angry words with your master anyhow. Lead."

CHAPTER V

THE WIZARD'S ALLY

A GRASS mat behind the man hung drawn aside. The path began to show all the signs of fantastic sorcery. More skulls. Monstrous grass-stuffed snakes. Human embryos hung in baskets. All the savage claptrap designed to build the impression of the powers of darkness. But no ambush lurked beside the trail.

"I'd call this a military armistice," the colonel murmured.

The path opened out to a clearing. A regular little colony of huts straggled about a stout fence which surrounded four more huts. On every pole-top was a skull of some kind—monkey, lion, antelope, leopard, any and everything. All their big teeth grinned out at the comer. The pile of rawhide-lashed thorn that made the gate stood open.

"The welcome mat," Neale said. "If we once go in and he means treachery, we'll never fight out."

"Push the luck," the colonel said doggedly, "if that's what you want to call it."

Inside the fence three stools stood. The mouthpiece dusted two of them off with his foot. Nobody else was in sight. The white men sat down. "Now we'll have to wait," Neale said, "to fatten the guy's dignity."

But almost immediately a man surprised them by coming out. He surprised them more in that he came wrapped only in the standard greased sheet. None of the usual trappings of skullduggery hung about him—no snake skins, no baby skulls, no dried roots. Particularly, not the indispensible medicine bag.

"Which," Neale said, "I take as a compliment. He's learned he can't fool us."

The man was of an indeterminate middle age. His face as shrewd as a diplomat's with clever eyes as hard as black agate; definitely a man of no inhibitions, no weaknesses. And very definitely, no fool. He had the composure of one accustomed to control inferior minds, the assurance of a leader. His thin nose, startlingly at variance with the local flatness of feature, suggested some Arab blood. He sat himself down on the third stool.

He said, "Amongst those who understand there need be no war."

"For war can come home," Neale said quickly. And he had to hold the upper hand. "But an accounting is due, little backwoods wizard who calls himself great. An accounting for"—he ticked off them on his hand—"a lion that would have attacked us for no reason, a lion with a black chin." He watched the wizard's face.

The man's expression changed not a muscle from its stony composure. "The account is paid," he said. "The lion is dead."

"But not the evil thought that sent it. Next, for a night sending to a hut in which we were not."

"It is paid. Another lion is dead."

"Next, for a man trap in the path and a spider web with a blow-gun dust."

"Of them no harm came, and they can be compensated."

They were adding up to quite a list of murderous attempts that these white men had beaten. But there was still the not-so-fortunate item. "And most evil, the meal-and-honey cakes of which two men died. How, O wizard, will that be compensated?"

"By death! It will be a fair compensation." The wizard looked at Neale like a stone idol. "But the mealy-cakes were not mine. The order was given, but I do not know that so-sudden poison."

Neale caught at the word "order."

"Ha! So you have a master who has ordered these evils. Against that master we have a

war, and you, little wizard, will show us where he hides or our war covers your house, in which we may die but you will surely die first."

Threats did not move the man's face. "No master," he said evenly. "An ally."

Neale kept translating. The colonel ejaculated his astonishment. "An ally? Great Scot! Africa has been learning some modern terms."

"Yeah," said Neale, with a twisted grin. "The protected subject has picked some of the finer points of civilization out of war's leavings." And to the wizard, "We know that of yourself you had no cause for quarrel with us. It is that white man, your ally, who is our enemy. To that man we carry a war."

"Not a white man," said the wizard evenly.

"Lie not, wizard! Who but a white man has directed all your feeble wizardries against us? Who else would be clever enough to organize so much loot of the white *serkali's* property, so much destruction of outlying stations?"

The wizard's calm reply fell like a demolition bomb.

"A yellow man."

Neale stared at him as though shell-shocked, his jaw loose, his eyes empty on the outward landscape, looking inward at his own racing thoughts. And then he pounded a fist into the other hand and went into one of his furies of cursing his own obtuseness.

"That's it, by God's damnation! Me, looking at it like an ape and not seeing it! Damn, I don't know how I've reached my age alive!"

"What this time, Sergeant? What have you missed, so obvious that even a colonel couldn't see it?"

"That monkey-man with the honey-cakes! Chattering about his far father's village! Mumbling Lib dialect like an ape! Slant eyes! Red hair! Blast me for a fool! Of course it was a wig! Of course he was a Jap! And his father is never so damn far away in Africa, being none but the devil himself."

THE colonel absorbed it all with muted whistles, nodding his head as each item clarified itself. "Yes, it all clicks, Sergeant. We couldn't altogether understand any irreconcilable left-over as rabid and persistent as this. We've treated 'em well enough. But a Jap! And this the air-supply route to Burma! And, of course, we never did round up more than a thin dozen of the Jap traders who swarmed all the way down from Egypt."

Neale was pointing his finger at the wizard like a gun. "So this yellow man we shall take. For your interference with us as his ally an accounting will yet be."

The wizard remained unruffled. He seemed to know exactly the strength as well as the weakness of his position. He posed the question that the colonel had been pointing all along.

"How will you take him, white men? He is very clever. He knows all the things that white men know. He knows what you do not know—all the little roads of this jungle. In all your searching, you have found no more than that such a man is."

Neale had no more answer to the question than at any time.

"Therefore," the wizard said evenly, "I now sit and speak with you as men having understanding of one another. It has become known to me that you are one whose name in the land is Tembo. This thing I did not know before. Of Tembo it is said that he has also the wisdom of the elephant. Accordingly it has become clear to me that I made alliance with the wrong side. It is only the ape who cannot change his mind, because he has none. Wherefore, strong white men, I offer to change to your side my strong alliance."

"Well, I'll be eternally—" The colonel didn't know what eternal condition would adequately meet his amazement when Neale had translated this. "Did I say modern? Here's Africa dealing in co-belligerent diplomacy!"

Neale glowered a distasteful look at the callousness of the wizard's opportunist effrontery.

"Without which alliance," the wizard shrewdly put in, "you will never conquer that enemy."

At Neale's translation, the colonel sucked in his lip. "I'm very much afraid the calculating ruffian is right. We don't even know where our so clever Jap is and, with this fellow and his converts tipping him off to our every move, we'd never get within a mile of him."

"Well, hell's fires! Can we tie up with a highbinding mob chief like this?"

The colonel nodded with wryly pursed mouth. Very succinctly, he framed his words. "It has been done, my innocent friend. In the exigencies of war we have taken to our virtuous bosom some pretty rambunctious turncoats. We are diplomatically trying to do so in more than one quarter again, and when they throw over their pals and come in on the winning side, we shall kiss them and tell them they have noble sentiments at last."

"Well," Neale grumbled, "you're the boss. I wouldn't do it, on a sergeant's pay. Shall I tell the slimy crook O.K.?"

"I'm afraid we'll have to. We've seen how deadly this Jap agent can be in just four days. Our information of his activities here, which I came down to investigate, runs into millions of dollars in equipment and burnt up gasoline."

"Yeah!" Neale surged to a forgotten vindictiveness. "And my good pals at Fort Dane —and the dog. Sure, I'll tell him. I ain't proud of anything that creeps or crawls or stinks,

just so we get that damned Jap. And I suppose, sir, when we get him, you'll want to tie him up nice and gentle and take him back to your justice up there at AMG headquarters?"

"That is one of the regrettable white-man inhibitions, Sergeant, for which we suffer in this country where, as you say, the other fellow has none."

Neale growled the acceptance of this fantastic alliance to the wizard. The man answered with his wooden composure, "It is good. As the word of Tembo is also good. My young men are ready, knowing that this would be so, for I knew that you were also wise men of understanding. Let my allies take food, and my mistaken judgment of these many months can be atoned this very day."

"Can we trust him?" The colonel looked big-eyed at Neale. His hand went involuntarily to his throat as though to choke off the possibility of swallowing anything. "Those twisted-up porters—"

"I suppose we can. This crook is playing the side his bread is buttered on. And those mealy-cakes were the Jap's, anyway."

Women brought curdled goat's milk in gourds, an indistinguishable warm mass in clay pots, and—of all things—mealy-cakes!

Neale looked at the wizard as grimly as Nemesis poised to strike. The wizard looked back at him with an expression of gray rock. Suddenly Neale reached for a cake, fumbling for it, his eyes never leaving the wizard's, and bit savagely into it.

For the first time since they had seen him, the man let his hard lips spread away from his teeth. "It is good," he gave his opinion. "Tembo is a brave man. Also he has a good judgment of men."

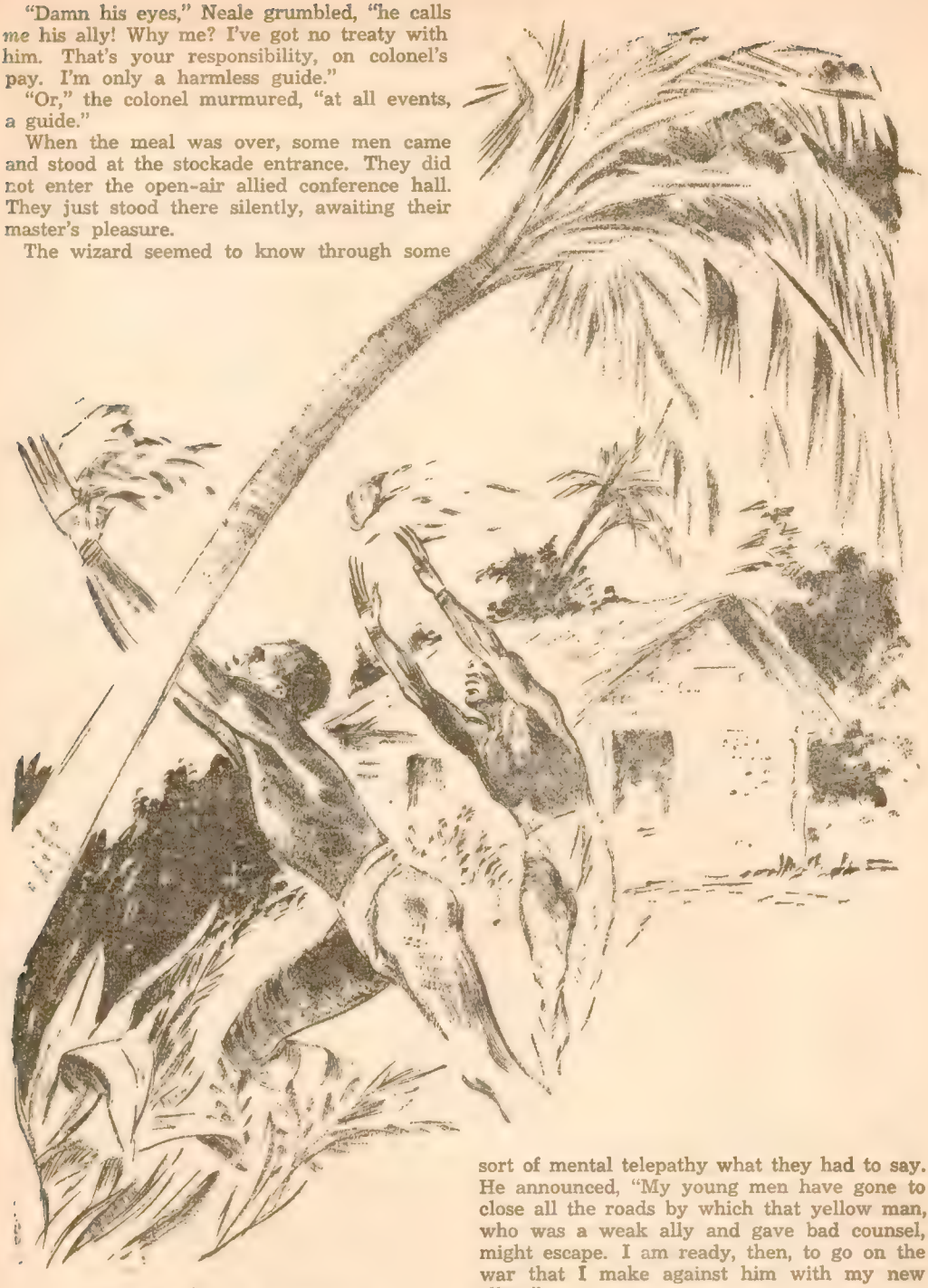
The colonel couldn't understand a single word of it, but his opinion agreed. "That took guts, Sergeant. Now I'll follow suit." And a little later he murmured, apropos of nothing, "As a matter of fact, it took a bellyful of guts to shove ahead to here, you knowing all the things I didn't."

"Damn his eyes," Neale grumbled, "he calls *me* his ally! Why me? I've got no treaty with him. That's your responsibility, on colonel's pay. I'm only a harmless guide."

"Or," the colonel murmured, "at all events, a guide."

When the meal was over, some men came and stood at the stockade entrance. They did not enter the open-air allied conference hall. They just stood there silently, awaiting their master's pleasure.

The wizard seemed to know through some sort of mental telepathy what they had to say. He announced, "My young men have gone to close all the roads by which that yellow man, who was a weak ally and gave bad counsel, might escape. I am ready, then, to go on the war that I make against him with my new allies."



The lion men gamboled among the flowers with shapeless somethings, batting them with steel paws.

"He talks like it was an afternoon's chore. . . How far is this yellow man's place, wizard? Preparations, too, must surely be made."

"They are made, Tembo. Thus do I make

compensation for the magics I sent against you. The yellow man is now my enemy, for he gave me much bad counsel by which the gain was always his and the risk was mine, for which things I, who stay here, would be called to account." If it were possible for the man's face to have any expression, one might almost have detected a cold vindictiveness in it.

"How far, wizard?" Neale repeated.

"Not far, Tembo. And the man remains as yet unsuspicious that I have thrown away the old alliance and have made a new one. He will be taken. My young men are closing in on his place."

At a sign from him a man armed with only a stick and his panga knife in his loin-string led the way along a path that followed a gradual rise.

"From a hill we shall see," said the wizard. "This work is mine without further trouble on your part."

The hill was one of those curious tumbled piles of intrusive granite left in the African plain by the erosion of the basic basalt. Supporting only sparse brush and leafless euphorbia, it formed the kind of observation post that Neale had used many a time to spot far-ranging game for the clients he guided.

From its crest you could see over the solid mass of tree-tops, which looked thick enough to walk upon. A couple of miles away, on another little eminence where it could catch the breeze, was another clearing. In its center stood a neat hut and an incredibly neat flower garden. There was no African haphazardness about it; it was all artistically landscaped, with trees set in exactly the right position. In the distance it looked like a miniature garden, set in its bowl of green jade.

"Exactly so," said the colonel. "That's the Japanese of it. Ruthless, treacherous, heartless—and inherently artists. Nobody else would take time out from his deadly work to do that in the middle of an African jungle."

The wizard was announcing the show he was giving. "Five roads lead away from that place. My young men even now are creeping in each one of them."

"What would prevent a man from just hiding out in the jungle?" the colonel wondered.

The wizard sensed his question out of his tone. "The jungle is a wall that a man must hew with a *panga*. My ally Tembo knows it is so. You have seen the wall of it as you came."

"Wish to heck he wouldn't honor just me with his damned alliance," Tembo growled. "If some of those young men he talks about so much don't weaken in one of those five runways, our Jap is a rat as good as caught."

"*Hau!*" the wizard exclaimed. "My young men emerge. The yellow man has not the craft of Tembo, who, like the elephant, takes all the precautions that his wisdom counsels. We shall see now a sending that will not find an empty house."

"A sen—! Hey, colonel, Sir! He's pulled a witchcraft on the guy! He's sent out his lion men!"

The significance of it did not immediately impinge upon the colonel's consciousness. He said, "I suppose he wants to show off his stuff, show that it works sometimes." And then, as the possibilities of the thing awoke his memories, "Good Lord! The *wa-simba* fellows! What will they do? We want to take him prisoner!"

"What they will do"—Neale was not nearly so apprehensive as the colonel—"is what they would have done to us. They'll rip him to rags with steel claws."

It was only the wind in the right direction that brought a far moan of sound from the clearing. A faint rumble vibrated in answer. A tawny yellow form was slinking flat-bellied towards the house.

"But, good God! We've got to stop them! We must have the man alive! He must be questioned! AMG rulings are——"

Once again the wizard sensed the meaning in the colonel's agitation. He said, "I cannot now stop my young men. I can send the thought, but they are now lions who cannot read my thought."

Neale translated the wizard's grotesque claim without any surprise or agitation at all. "Guess we're stymied," he coolly accepted the position.

"Heavens! There's one of them! We'll have to— Tell him to give us some men, then—enough to drive his damned animals off! If they stop to pull off their prowl and dance we can reach there in time."

The wizard sat like stone on his stone seat. He said, "No road goes from this place to that place."

Neale cut off his translation to whistle. "Whee-ee! The rat has caught on! He's out of the cage! See him at the door?"

IT SEEMED indeed that the warning roars of the pack were the first intimation the enemy had that his ally had changed sides. He stood just a moment at the door; and then his own tendency to treachery told him the whole story in a flash. He bolted back and the next instant the thin crack of a rifle came over the tree-tops.

Whatever he shot at must have been well hidden, for no dark form leaped from under its lion hide.

"Couple more closing in from behind," Neale observed, as if reporting a game.

From that jungle grandstand they could see tawny shapes crouched behind trees, sheltered from the hut's line of fire.

"So he had to do his artistic landscaping," Neale commented grimly. "And he'll have neat little bamboo windows 'round in the back of his house, too."

The rifle spat sporadically. Either the lion men were very clever or the Jap was a very good saboteur agent very poorly trained in shooting.

"He can't guard all the windows all the time." There was almost wishful thinking in Neale's commentary. Suddenly, "Woof!" he shouted. "That one's taking a chance!"

A sand-colored form was galloping clumsily on all fours across a small stretch of clearing. Anybody could have stopped it. But it seemed to know exactly where the shooter was. It reached the hut wall and bounded head first, exactly as a cat would, through the unglazed square of a window.

Neale's breath rasped in and held behind his clenched teeth. The colonel moaned a long "Oo-oo-ooh!" as though he could feel what he could not see. The wizard sat like a stone on his stone.

A dozen lithe forms leaped from vantage points where they had hitherto remained marvelously hidden, and rushed for the house. They poured themselves into it, diving head first.

Distance killed all sound and wattle walls hid whatever bloody thing was happening. Neale translated it, nonetheless.

"A rat in a cage! Like we would have been in the hut he planned for us!" He glared at his new ally.

The colonel said nothing. He was staring as at a horror picture dramatized by the most expert Hollywood talent.

A lion man raced out of the door. It seemed, at that distance, that something trailed behind him. Others tumbled from windows. They gamboled with shapeless somethings amongst the garden flowers, throwing them high, batting at them with steel paws as they came down. They who had been yellow seemed to be red.

The wizard spoke. "Thus do I, *M'chawi-wa-Tagati,* give compensation for two servants who died, and sufficiently do I prove my alliance."

Neale looked at the colonel. His eyes were hard and cold with satisfaction. He said slowly, "I'd call it paid."

The colonel looked at him and his eyes were tragic. "But, my God! We should have taken him prisoner."

Neale's twisted grin broke. "You can't be expected to control the sector held by your ally."

The colonel stared over the landscape and back to Neale, and back, and back again. Finally he said, "Neale, you're a top-ranking devil. I believe you knew all along what this ruffian was planning."

"No, sir. Honest, I didn't. At all events, not till we were well started and he kept talking about his young men creeping along the trails. Though I might have guessed something of the sort, if I'd been smart. But I've been awful dumb on some of my guessing all along."

"I think," the colonel said, "you are cheerfully lying."

A little later, trudging the path back to the wizard's lodge, Neale summed up his calculations. "Though I wouldn't call it paid in full," he grumbled. "There's the good guys who cooked at Fort Dane." And half a mile farther, "And the dog."

Much later—a good week later—comfortable and washed and fed at Mai Duprah, the colonel sent for Neale.

"Sergeant," he said. "You've shown yourself to have a hell of a lot more knowledge of Africa than anybody at AMG headquarters. I'm recommending you for transfer to the office with a grade and"—he grinned with the satisfaction of a benefactor—"something better than a sergeant's pay."

Neale convulsed as though shot. "Wha-a-at? The office? Sir, you can't do that to me. You—I know what's in your mind. You're thinking of reports M-7 to P-19 that you'll have to write. By the square yard, they'll have to be written. And desk-sitters who've never known a good wizard won't understand any of them and they'll ask questions over five more acres. And you'll have to have the honor to reply over— Nossir! That's a colonel's headache to explain his haphazard alliances. Me, I don't know how to write forms. I'm just a harmless guide."

TOUGH ON THE TILLER

By John Scott Douglas

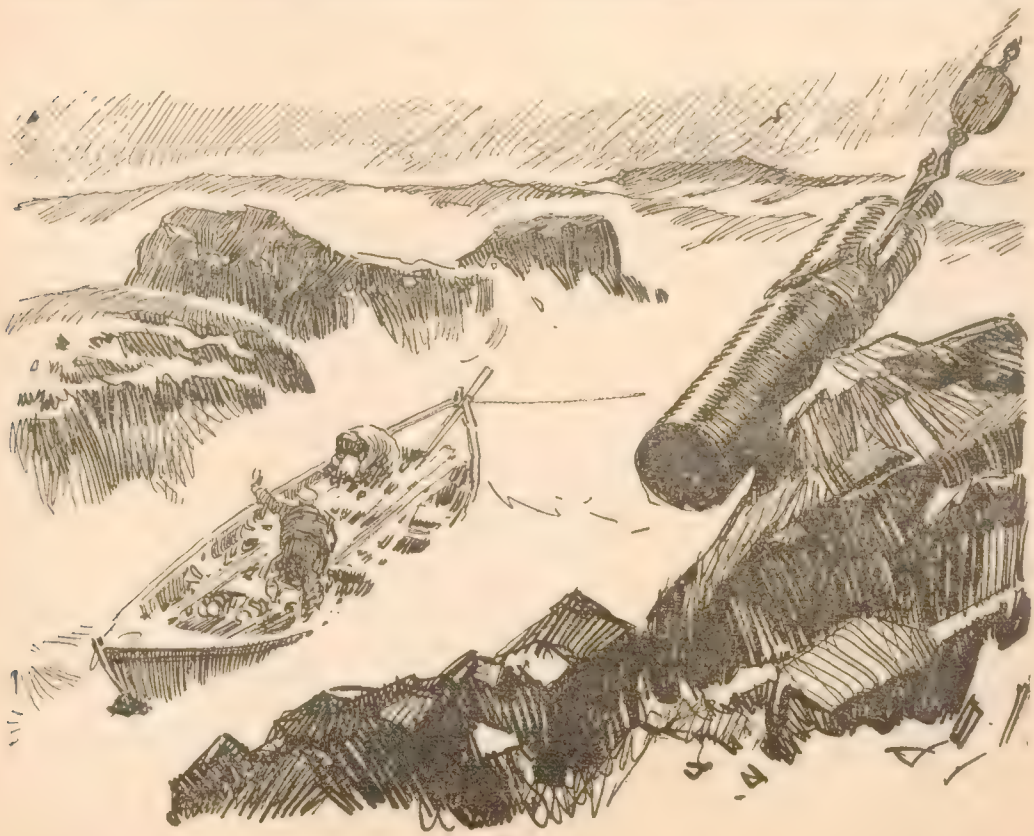
SALT spray fell like rain as we approached Pinnacle Point. The gray backwashes from the cliffs rode under the whaleboat in seething rushes, but the creaking of oarlocks and the heavy breathing of the four oarsmen were almost lost beneath other sounds —the whip-crack of crashing combers, followed by their booming cannonading against the rock-girded cliffs, and, high overhead, the mournful cries of wheeling gulls and cormorants.

The low clouds were sullen with rain pressure, but on the southern horizon there was a metallic glow that brought into sharp focus the angle of the second mate's cheekbone and the lines and scars that over half a century of hard living had put there. Those scars, made by weapons ranging from beer mugs to rum-runners' guns, accounted for the yarn that Nels Carlson honed his razor on his face.

As he stood with rubber-booted legs wide-braced on the stern thwart, blue eyes slightly narrowed and the muscles of his great hand corded with his grip on the tiller, he needed only a white beard, a helmet with horns and a mail-shirt to complete the picture of some Viking ancestor. Life had never tamed Carlson, but I wondered if nature weren't now taking a hand.

The automatic light atop the sheerwater bluff was dark, but this was no day to supply it with acetylene-gas tanks. The point was exposed to the Gulf of Alaska, without indentation for landing except a slight angle on its north side, where trapped seas broke in creaming sheets high up a narrow crevasse. It wasn't flood tide, so this cleft could be approached only through a turmoil of breakers and cascading backwashes, beneath which I made out the blurred shape of rocks bearded in seaweed.

"No rocks to the cliff base," Hank Van Horn, the third mate, reported, gripping my shoulder to brace himself as he started aft.



ILLUSTRATED BY
GORDON GRANT

A chill like a lump of ice shot down my back. I understood how those eight men had lost their lives.

"Bet this is rock bottom, though," said Bill Delaney, the muscles rippling smoothly in his bare brown back as he lay back in his stroke. "Chances are . . . hook will drag . . . or foul."

"Pipe down, Delaney! Save your breath—you may need it."

Carlson's bassoon voice had an edge as if he were remembering how he'd grounded the boat the previous day by not anchoring out from a beach as Delaney suggested. The mate didn't know the extreme Alaskan tides, but Delaney did, for he was the only native Alaskan on the lighthouse tender, and though only eighteen, he'd spent nine summers sailing out of Seward on his father's fishing boat.

Without awaiting Van's help, Carlson heaved over the two-fluked anchor, and as the line rippled through the water, he tossed overboard the red keg buoy, which had a second line to the hook in case the first parted. Then he shipped the tiller, and after dropping on the thwart beside Van, began snubbing the anchor

line on a cleat when sidewashes threatened to hurl us against the cliffs to starboard.

These walls were now so close that the starboard oarsmen used their oars to fend the boat off. Barrows' oar snapped like a matchstick as the boat surged starboard on a comber. He would have gone over the opposite gunwale if Ben Locke, who was sitting between the thwarts, hadn't grabbed him.

After handing Barrows a spare oar, Locke worked forward, his lean and serious face dead sober. I shifted position in the bow and handed him the end of the bow painter. Locke was an ideal coxswain, with the lightning reactions often found in rangy, high-strung men, but as he put his foot on the bow gunwale, he had a worried frown. He didn't jump when the boat crashed jarringly against the rocks, for the backwash from the previous breaker would have swept him from his feet, nor did he jump at our second and third impacts.

Carlson's voice penetrated the seas' booming, "Don't take all day, Locke!"

"No, Mr. Carlson."

The coxswain tensed, then sprang—blindly, as if unable to see his way ahead. Slimy seaweed was like ice under his rubber boots; he found no real footing, but kept moving, aided by the insurging breaker. But the backwash caught him, and with no purchase for his feet, he vanished in a smother of foam.

The boat slid back, too. Carlson frantically took up slack to prevent its next rush from crushing Locke against the rocks. But something was wrong; though the mate had taken in considerable line, it was still slack, and we were starting forward again.

LOCKE'S head reappeared. He clung to the seaweed beyond our bow, looking dazed as he tried to pull himself up. His water-filled boots made the effort too great. I was too numb with horror to think clearly until Delaney shipped his oar and sprang forward to fend off the boat.

Then I grabbed a spare oar to help. A second later a big hand reached over my shoulder to seize my oar and a voice roared in my ear, "Get clear, March!" Without waiting for me to move, Carlson flung me back against a thwart. I didn't resent the rough treatment, for he had twice my strength.

The cliff walls blurred with our swift rush, and strained wood creaked as Delaney and Carlson braced their oars, one on each side of Locke's body. The mate was digging his heel into my ankle, and though I was giddy with pain, I couldn't move without upsetting him. The muscles stood out on Delaney's back like white cords; he was tremendously strong, though not much above medium height. Together, and assisted by water buoyancy, they prevented well over a ton of steel tanks, boat and men from crushing the life from the coxswain.

As the boat slid out, Carlson sprawled over the bow, catching Locke's collar. Delaney and I pulled both men into the boat.

"Enough of this!" Carlson growled, rising. "We'll wait until the seas moderate to tend this light."

Delaney grinned. A trace of dimples, a decisive jaw and a shock of crisp black hair made him as handsome as the mate was homely. And though he wasn't exactly cocky, he had the assurance of one who has never found anything he can't whip.

"I can get the line ashore, Mr. Carlson," he said. "I'm a *skookum* roughwater man."

Knowing the meaning of that word Alaskan whites have borrowed from the Indians, the mate's hard-bitten face clouded. He jerked around, coldly eyeing Van, who had just finished taking up slack.

"Pay out line," he said roughly, in the manner of a man about to teach someone a lesson. "This second-class seaman says he's 'plenty good!' "

Grinning good-naturedly, Delaney pulled off rubber boots and socks, and then drew in the wet painter. Carlson didn't intend the lesson to go beyond a scare, so he and Locke held oars ready to fend off the boat.

"You won't need those," Delaney laughed. "I'll make it."

Bracing a foot on the gunwale as we smashed into the rocks, he leapt like a mountain goat, his bare feet digging into the seaweed. He didn't reach the cleft before a backwash curled from the cliffs. Delaney flattened himself to the rocks, both fists embedded in seaweed. When the wash had flowed over him, he scrambled to hands and knees and started forward, being caught and surged ahead by the next breaker. After its force was spent, he once more dug his hands into the tangled mass of sea grasses, waiting until the backlash foamed over him before jumping quickly to his feet and scrambling high enough up the crevasse to escape the next comber.

He still gripped the painter, and now he made it fast around a rocky spur. Pinioned between the two lines, the boat could not butt the rocks with damaging force.

Delaney grinned, waving a bleeding hand. "Skookum!" he called. "Cast me another line, Mr. Carlson."

The mate scowled as he heaved it. Delaney climbed to the top of the crevasse and secured it around a rock. With its help, we took turns swinging from the boat when it crashed in, until Carlson and four of us seamen were at the summit, leaving only Van and Locke in the boat.

Carlson failed to give Delaney the word of approval he usually gave when a man accomplished something difficult. Silently, he hitched

his tool sack over his shoulder, and avoiding the numerous bird nests and ignoring excited birds flying about his head, he climbed the rough trail up the ridge, while we followed. Delaney freed the working line and carried it along the precipice behind us.

Automatic lights are the most common navigational aid in the territory, because they burn a year without "recharging." That's important in Alaska, where weather may make it impossible to tend lights in outside waters except in spring and summer. The Pinnacle Point Light stood on a shack about Carlson's height, the shack supporting a lantern which enclosed a lens. The little house held eight acetylene tanks, enough gas to keep a pilot light burning steadily for a year and to keep the light flashing for as long—if it didn't blink on too many times a minute. A flashing device controlled this, conserving fuel and being set so that each light had a characteristic number of flashes and intervals of darkness. A mariner might miss several lights in fog or heavy weather, and yet he'd know his exact position from the distinctive signals of the next automatic light he sighted.

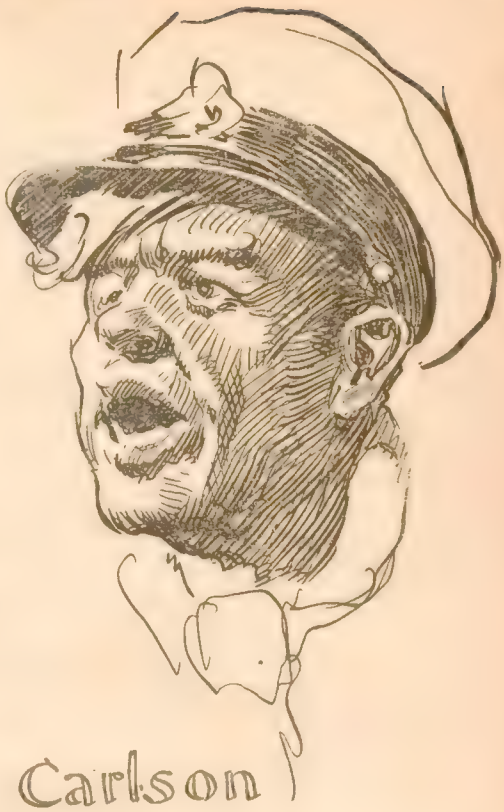
Now Carlson unlocked the shack, and after finding a block inside, hung it from a hook on the roof. Without a word, he took Delaney's line and reeved it through the block, then stepped inside to begin loosening the pipe connections of the empty tanks.

We signaled Van. Locke had already taken a couple of hitches around one of the heavy steel cylinders, and so we began heave-hoing on the line. It was back-breaking work, the tank catching on every cliff projection, and we were relieved when it reached the top, so Barrows could carry it in to Carlson. He had an empty ready, and we lowered it to what seemed a toy boat, so far below us was it. It danced wildly, but we didn't notice anything wrong, and the two men in the boat were too busy to do so, either.

The fifth tank was swayed up to the ridge and Barrow and I were making another empty fast when an indistinct thud caused Delaney to glance below.

"Good God!" he gasped, then yelled, *"Mr. Carlson!"*

THE mate came running. The boat slid sluggishly off the rocks, lying almost on its port gunwale. Weighted on that side by eight tanks and both men, it had not yet righted itself before the next wave sent it crashing in again, striking so hard that I winced. Van and Locke, having just staggered erect, were again knocked flat, partly against the gunwale, partly on the rocks. The tanks flew into the air like pins in a bowling alley—steel tanks weighing at least 135 pounds, which could kill or maim a man.



Locke looked punch-drunk as he headed toward the bow. But Van realized they must take up slack on the anchor line. Tanks rolling between the thwarts knocked him down twice, but he kept moving aft until another breaker lifted and swept the boat in once more on its side. When Van saw Locke sprawled limply over the gunwale, he crawled forward to pull him into the boat. So he failed to reach the anchor line before the starboard side rose and he was once more hurled prone, the remaining six tanks in the boat flying around him.

It was the keg buoy, now much closer to the rocks, which explained this accident. The anchor had dragged, allowing slack in the stern line. Delaney had suspected it was a rock bottom; and someone should have realized he was right when Carlson needed so long to take up slack at the time of Locke's accident. But the accident had fully occupied our minds.

It seemed certain that with tension only on the bow line, the boat would continue smashing broadside until it broke up. I expected that would happen before anyone could make the hard climb down to help the two men.

Delaney jerked the line from the empty tank, swiftly bent a knot in the end, and pointed to the portion reeved through the block.

"Don't let that get away from you, Bar-

rows!" he cried, and ran to the cliff edge. "They need a skookum hand!"

"*Stop!*" Carlson exploded, but a second too late.

Delaney was already over the precipice, pushing himself away from its face with his feet as he vanished. The mate said nothing to Barrows and me, so we paid out line fast because we wanted to help the men in the boat and didn't realize that we might be sending Delaney to his death. By the time the mate noticed us, we'd paid out fifteen feet and he didn't dare have us sway Delaney up again. He had only a handhold and might fall.

Another mate might have sworn from helplessness, but Carlson's reproving tone showed us more clearly what a kid stunt it had been.

"I'd expect better judgment of you, March! And you, Barrow!" Almost under his breath he added, "Delaney!" as though thinking of something long past.

By the time the line went slack, I felt like putting on a duncecap and sitting in the corner. Judging from the sheepish expression on Barrows' round, homely face, he felt the same. Long chances are necessary in lighthouse work because most of your work is in dangerous places other ships avoid, but this chance was too long. Delaney had to swing eight or ten feet from the cliff face to drop into the whaleboat when it surged out, and then he might land on rolling tanks or the thwarts.

But I felt better when I joined Carlson on the cliff edge. The boat no longer danced. Delaney was taking in slack. He snubbed the line as the nearly submerged boat slid heavily toward the rocks, so that it was scarcely jarred. Van reached the stern thwart, helping him to make the line taut. Locke climbed shakily to a thwart, looking groggy.

"Skookum!" Carlson said dryly, turning toward the light.

Before the last empty tank was lowered, a hard-driving rain was falling and the seas were feathered. Carlson decided to sacrifice the working line to safety, for the crevasse was like a series of small waterfalls and we couldn't descend without it. As we neared the boat, we saw that seams were open and the bow keel badly loosened. All three men bailed.

I couldn't believe Carlson would attempt to cross a quarter-mile of heavy seas in a boat so badly damaged. But he showed us the difference between long chances that don't make sense and those that do.

"The *Sumac* has only one whaleboat, and we're behind our work schedule," he said, as the boat came in. "We've got to try to save it. If we founder, the better swimmers must help the others until the launch can be lowered to pick us up."

With the assistance of the working line, we piled into the boat, the last man freeing the painter. A minute later we weighed anchor.

The point was small protection, but when the full sweep of the wind caught us, cascading white seas over our bow, I longed for its slight shelter. We pounded and shook in the chops, widening the seams, and the water rose almost to the thwarts, though every man not on an oar, except Carlson, was bailing. Momentarily, I expected the shattered boat to fall apart. I had no illusions about being able to swim long in such cold water and heavy seas. I got my wind up to look toward the *Sumac,* for she seemed ten miles rather than an eighth of a mile away.

When I got the shakes so badly I could hardly bail, I looked at Carlson, standing Gibraltar-steady on his feet, and felt ashamed. His narrowed eyes gleamed blue, and in his scarred, battered face was a quiet excitement which was calming and made me feel not much could go wrong with Carlson at the tiller.

It was disturbing, however, to remember that Delaney had twice that day proved the mate wrong. Hadn't Delaney weakened the foundations of the Carlson legend for us all?

It's been a hell of a day for Carlson, I thought. Shown up twice by a seaman, second class! Drowning here would be a hell of an unimportant way for the great old-squarehead to go!

NELS CARLSON was a Coast Guard legend. So numerous were the stories about his hell-raising that you couldn't separate fact from fancy. But it was pretty certain that he'd enlisted at the beginning of the century and won five citations before the Coast Guard, with sighs of relief, retired him. It did no good to question him about those citations because he'd only tell you he'd drowned five unpopular commanders.

A warrant officer who sailed with Carlson in the first World War swore that Carlson once ignored an order to abandon a torpedoed cutter and kept a crew firing a 3-inch gun until he sank the sub which had attacked his ship. It was like Carlson, though he wasn't a gunner. Another tale concerned Carlson drawing a gun on a commander he didn't think was doing his best to capture a rum-runner. After taking the prize to port, Carlson and the officers who had backed him up faced serious charges, but the rum-runner testified he'd paid the commander for protection and hadn't gotten it, so it was the commander who was dishonorably discharged and not Carlson.

During all his years of service, Carlson went on roaring drunks, overstayed leaves, engaged in monumental brawls, and survived more charges and deck courts than any man before him because his superiors had a secret affection for this wild man and respect for the courage which had earned him five citations. They never questioned his honesty, his loyalty to the service, or his total lack of tact. He reached

chief boatswain's mate's rating more times than he could remember, always being demoted again, in the end being retired as a second boatswain's mate, an unusually low rating for one with his long service.

Carlson had been retired several years at the time of Pearl Harbor, and he went blazing mad when told he was too old to re-enlist. His enraged telegrams to every warrant and commissioned officer he could recall must have stirred old memories—of Carlson's boat carrying a breeches-buoy line to a sinking ship, of the squarehead diving into heavy seas to save a shipmate swept overboard, of Carlson jumping to the deck of a disabled German sub with a machine gun to prevent the crew from reaching their deck guns. Every one of those officers "put in" for Carlson, even men who once thought he should be dismissed for the good of the service. It was an unusual case, but Carlson was an unusual man, and they all knew he was a good seaman to have beside them in a fight.

But he wasn't placed under an old shipmate. Some higher-up apparently thought he'd give Carlson a soft berth on the lighthouse tender *Sumac*, not realizing that it was like having a racehorse haul coal. Carlson was too grateful to be back in uniform to protest.

When he came aboard the *Sumac* we were proud to have such a shipmate, but somewhat fearful, too. Carlson was still a tough old rooster, but we soon discovered that retirement had mellowed him. Sometimes he'd drop in at the Stedman when the tender was in Ketchikan and jar our spines with good-natured backslaps. We'd brag to seamen of other cutters if he'd have a beer with us. Usually he stopped at one.

In a whaleboat, though, we knew Carlson hadn't changed much. It wasn't just that he was a good roughwater mate, but there seemed to be something primitive and untamed in him that relished the elements at their worst. If he didn't take the chances he once had, it wasn't because he didn't want to, but because years had taught him something he couldn't frame in words. He tried to explain, I'm sure, for several times when he turned back because a blow made it too dangerous to tend a light, he'd start to tell us something and then fall silent. Words were hard for him, and I think he came closest to expressing his thought when he said, "You can't buck nature. You got to make her work for you, not against you."

When we reached the lee side of the *Sumac*, the whaleboat couldn't be taken up on the falls until we climbed lines and removed the tanks. In sheltered waters at Cordova, it was lowered, rowed forward, and whisked up to the forward work deck with the winch. During the next few days Carlson tended the post lights at Cordova and unloaded a year's supply of foodstuffs and coal at nearby Cape Hinchinbrook Lighthouse with the two small launches and the cargo boats, and in his spare time repaired the whaleboat so well that it gave no further trouble during the weeks we worked outside lights, beacons and buoys near Prince William Sound and Seward.

In repairing the boat and in our other work, Carlson proved himself an all-around seaman, often surprising us by accomplishing the seemingly impossible. We had an example of this after setting the whistling buoy at the entrance to Harding Gateway and sailing into Resurrection Bay to take on oil at the Seward oil dock. A fisherman sailed alongside to inform us that flood tide and heavy seas had pulled the buoy underwater, cutting off air so that the acetylene pilot light had gone out.

It was still rough when we reached the buoy, but when we brushed its side, both Barrows and Delaney jumped to its slippery deck. Delaney clung to the superstructure, and tried to support Barrows so that he could light the pilot. The buoy pitched and rolled so violently that both men were soon retching and unable to continue their efforts to keep a match burning. Taking the buoy aboard in such seas was out of the question, so we went alongside and the winchman swung the boom out and dropped a hook, taking aboard one green-complexioned seaman at a time.

As Delaney swung over the side, the ship bumped the buoy. Carlson was standing on the starboard side where a section of steel rail had been removed. Without even momentary hesitation, he jumped and caught the steel superstructure. He clung to this framework with both legs while opening the lantern door. The wild bobbing and rolling battered him cruelly against the lantern, but he refused to accept the winch hook even when he was gagging and vomiting. The strong wind blew out match after match, but Carlson stubbornly refused to give up. And finally he closed the lantern door on a burning pilot light. The buoy light flashed its characteristic signal as the winch whisked him over the side.

BUT that minor triumph didn't alter the fact that Delaney knew Alaskan conditions better than Carlson, and he took satisfaction in showing up this disadvantage of the mate, often with really ingenious ideas.

One day, I remember, we rowed a mile through rock-impaled seas to a light high on a bluff. It was a routine job, difficult only because the heavy tanks had to be picked 145 feet up a cliff trail. Fog blew in while we tended the light, and a rising wind kicked up nasty chops. But it wasn't what lighthouse men call mean weather.

We bucked a running cross-current returning to the ship, and the blasts of the ship's foghorn rebounded from every rock. They looked

so different in the fog that Carlson had only his sense of direction to guide him. The necessity of avoiding these obstacles, together with a side-drift, threw all calculations askew. We'd row toward what seemed the source of the blasts, only to discover it was the echo from a rocky pinnacle. After doing this until we were completely lost, Carlson ordered us to row perpendicular to the current to reach shore.

By skirting the beach, we found the bottom of the trail, and set out again toward the ship, only to become hopelessly confused once more by the echoes. The seas were building up and so was Carlson's anger, for at intervals Delaney suggested that he was skookum at finding his way in fog. Carlson finally growled at him to take the tiller if he was so good.

Delaney went back to the beach to find our trail, and then cast overboard the stern line. He steered by it, rather than by our bow, and with it trailing straight behind, he was able to steer a reasonably straight course. Naturally there were still rocks and a side-drift, but at least we weren't circling blindly. Eventually we came close enough to see the *Sumac* through the fog. The trick, which Delaney said he'd learned from fishermen, was a good one. But it further weakened our faith in Carlson.

Ned Barrows saw what was happening and didn't like it.

"Sure Carlson makes mistakes," he said to me one day. "Who doesn't? But if we lose confidence in our mate, we'll be in trouble."

BARROWS had a rough and shaggy look completely in contrast with a disposition which had earned him the nickname of "Slap-Happy." Though I've seen him knock down three men with three blows, and carry a tank weighing as much as our lightest seaman up a cliff as high as a fifteen-story building without pause for breath, he was the least pugnacious man aboard. That was why it surprised me when Barrows quarreled with Delaney one night in the foc'sle over what Barrows called Delaney's belittling of Carlson.

One word led to another until Barrows finally said, "Want to make something of it, Delaney?"

"If I did," Delaney said coolly, "you'd regret it. I'm a skookum boxer."

That was too much for Barrows; his right uppercut meant business. Delaney hadn't kept his good looks by leading with his chin, but I hadn't thought of him as a boxer. Nor did he box much now. Side-stepping the blow in that effortless, assured manner of his, Delaney planted both fists in Barrows' midriff. He was so sure Barrows' fists would come down that he didn't bother to step back before letting Barrows have it on the jaw. The blow didn't knock out Barrows, but hitting his head on the bunkboard did, and we had to splash water on his face to bring him around.

"All right," Barrows said, rising. "You can box. But being skookum isn't enough."

"Why not, Slap-Happy?" grinned Delaney. He bore no grudge.

"You'll learn," said Barrows.

When Delaney left the foc'sle, some of the men suggested giving him the silent treatment. Barrows said it wouldn't work, and he was right. Delaney owned the only accordion aboard, and he was the only one who could play one well. Moreover, he had a skookum voice and knew dozens of almost-forgotten sea chanteys learned from old fishermen. You can't ignore the best entertainer aboard, even if there are things you don't like about him.

And there was a question whether the men who thought Delaney conceited were right. Braggarts are all cackle and no egg, but when Delaney claimed to be skookum at anything, he was as good as his promise. Nevertheless, Barrows was right in saying that it wasn't enough for Delaney to be "plenty good."

Locke carelessly gripped the fall lines too long one day when we were raising the whaleboat. He lost most of the flesh of his left hand when it was squeezed against the block. We signaled a cutter steaming eastward later that day, and transferred the coxswain to her so that he could receive hospital attention at Seward.

We put in at a small unnamed cove in the Kenai Peninsula that night, and after chow I had spectacular luck pulling in cod with a hand line. Carlson stopped to watch. The first I knew about a temporary coxswain having been appointed to fill Locke's place was when Delaney walked stiffly up to the mate to inquire whether it was true. He completely ignored me, and so did Carlson.

"Yes, it's true, Delaney. Barrows is taking Locke's place."

"May I inquire, Mr. Carlson, why I didn't get that place?"

Delaney stepped on dangerous ground questioning an officer's decision, so I was surprised at Carlson's patience.

"I recommended the best man for the place, Delaney. A man the others would follow."

Delaney knew that except in that one respect, he was the best man. For a moment I thought he would lose his head, saying something he'd regret, but after his lips parted, they tightened again.

"Thank you, Mr. Carlson," he said frankly. There was truce in his angry eyes but no surrender as he walked stiffly away.

After watching him disappear through the foc'sle head entrance, Carlson sighed, "A chip on his shoulder big as a fir log! We lone wolves!"

His back-slap lacked its usual vigor, and after he left, I wondered at Carlson's meaning. I could see little resemblance between the mate and Delaney.

THE following day, when the *Sumac* anchored off the Three Sisters Light, near Port Chatham, the Old Man called Carlson to the bridge, apparently to ask him whether he thought he could make it safely. The wind was shrill and strong as we loaded tanks into the whaleboat, and when Carlson came aft along the starboard side, his slicker flapped around his long legs.

Van and Barrows took their places at the fore and aft fall lines; the winch rumbled as the boat was lowered away. It swung in wide arcs by the time it was at deck level. We had to be careful to jump in on the inward swing.

The boat tossed wildly even on the lee side. It was hard to free the lifting hooks, but finally the oarsmen pushed us away from the ship and oars began creaking. The running seas tossed and shook the boat as we rounded the *Sumac's* stern. I guessed Captain Roberts had been less concerned about the heavy seas than the awkward position of the light.

High bluffs made that particular coastline a difficult spot to establish a light, and the rocks known as the Three Sisters was a compromise between a poor location and no aid at all. But they were a menace to navigation. Two of the low rocks in the formation formed a defile through which we must row to reach a third, slightly higher rock, perhaps a hundred yards behind the first two. There the light stood on a concrete base, for all three rocks were awash at high tide. Geysers of spray shooting up about them had given some imaginative lighthouse man the idea of three white sisters.

Delaney gulped as we entered the defile, for the waters seethed and churned in the confined space. You felt trapped, even though the rocks on either side weren't high. With insufficient rowing space, Carlson ordered the men to ship oars. They pushed along into a wider basin, enclosed by smaller rocks. In the basin the anchor was let go, and the seas carried us in short rushes another hundred yards to the large Third Sister rock on which the light stood.

Barrows jumped into the seaweed and scrambled up with the line. Finding no place to make it fast, he held it taut while we jumped out. Carlson was also unable to find a place to secure the line where it would hold. So finally he bent it around a small rock, and placed another rock on top of it.

"Should have a ring-bolt set in cement here," he muttered, picking up his tool bag.

Taking positions between the boat and the cement base of the low light tower, like a bucket brigade, we passed tanks from one man to another. Delaney, at the end of the line, carried several tanks up the steel ladder, then stacked the other ten at the base. It was a twelve-tank light. Carlson had not handed out a single empty tank.

I heard sulphurous language in the light shack, and climbed up to see what was wrong. "The blankety-blank salt spray has frozen these so-and-so connections!" Carlson grunted.

He didn't want to break the connection because so many had broken on the first part of the Westward Cruise that we were running short of spares. Finally, after ten minutes, of wrestling with it, he heaved furiously and the pipe nut turned. He lay the tank on the floor and I got it under one arm, descending until Delaney relieved me of it. The next two connections were also frozen.

As I awaited the fourth tank someone shouted, and I saw the boat slide out on a backwash and Barrows running to the bow. The rock Carlson had placed on the line was too light. Barrows drew in line and cast quickly, but didn't allow for the forceful cross-wind. Van had to take up slack swiftly on the anchor line to avoid being swept in broadside. Gusts caught the line on the next two attempts, making Van lose his temper.

"I'm hauling the boat back to the anchor," he shouted. "We can take aboard the empties when you're through. Tell Carlson to hurry or we won't be able to get through the defile."

Apparently Captain Roberts thought likewise, for two blasts of the horn urged us to hurry. Carlson stepped down the ladder, and after studying conditions, muttered, "What's biting the Old Man? We can still make it." He waved reassuringly to the skipper."

Minutes later, when I climbed the ladder again, Carlson had only one more empty tank. Neither his language nor his disposition had improved.

"Damned near every one of these blankety-blanks is frozen!" When the whistle blasted once more, the mate swore feelingly. "What does the Old Man take us for—a bunch of boots? We'll get back."

Now the horn blared in a series of imperious blasts that few mates except Carlson would have dared ignore.

"Mr. Carlson," I said, a moment later, "they're lowering the launch. It must be worse beyond the rocks than it looks from here."

"To hell with them!" he grunted, straining at the wrench. "We'll get through." A good mate hates to leave a job uncompleted.

The Diesel launch appeared around the *Sumac's* stern, rolling heavily as it headed toward us. We might need help if we capsized in the defile. Water boiled between the two sister rocks as the tide rose. Then I recalled that the launch was too deep draft to risk in the gap.

It swung broadside beyond the entrance. While the propeller churned foam astern, the first mate turned over the wheel to a seaman and raised the captain's megaphone. His voice couldn't reach us above the crashing surf, but Van must have heard, for he nodded.

He paid out anchor line until the whaleboat

danced just beyond the breaker line. Making a megaphone of his hands, he shouted.

Delaney ran up the rock. "Tell Mr. Carlson," he called to me, "that the Old Man *orders* us back. He lost eight men here once."

"We're through now, anyhow," Carlson said, when I climbed the ladder to repeat the message.

Trotting down the rocks together, we saw the breakers had driven our shipmates back fully three yards from their landing point. That explained Van's hesitancy in paying out line. The boat might be smashed on the rocks before we could climb in.

Carlson realized that was only part of our problem. "Hell!" he growled. "If Van comes in, the bunch of us couldn't pull the boat back through the breakers now!"

A CHILL like a lump of ice shot down my back. I understood how those eight men had lost their lives. The light shack was too small to accommodate more than three of us. When the Third Sister rock was awash not even the steel ladder would be safe.

The ship's horn sounded three long blasts, urging us to hurry. The *Sumac* was now almost screened from view by heavy mists.

The breakers had an ugly look, and if we were forced to swim, some of us would never reach the whaleboat.

Delaney pulled off rubber boots, shirt and dungarees, while the mate was frowningly regarding the water.

"If I can reach the boat," Delaney said decisively, "I can sure get a line back here. I'm a skookum swimmer."

Carlson turned and saw the seaman running. "*Wait, Delaney!*" But it was too late.

Delaney plunged into the first breaker, his head coming up momentarily and then disappearing as another curtain of foam curled and crashed. He was a skookum swimmer all right!

"The blankety-blank young fool!" Carlson's voice was shaken by a tremor of emotion. "He can't make it—few men could!"

But maybe he was wrong, for if Delaney could swim another two yards he was past the breaker line. Trouble was, he'd spent everything at the beginning and was now weakening. I held my breath as he disappeared for several long seconds. A big comber curled with a long, cracking sound. As it broke, Delaney's head reappeared, a dark spot against the milky foam. Too tired to sound, his head was still visible when the seas closed over him. Then he was tumbled over and over by the breaker.

"Form a chain!" a seaman called. But Carlson apparently thought little of the idea, for he remained motionless as we locked hands and ran down the rocks. The insurging breaker knocked the first two men flat and we had to drag them up to safety.

"Dumb! dumb! *dumb!*" Carlson was muttering as he stared at Delaney. "You got to make nature work *for* you, not fight her!"

Delaney had reached the rock shelf, and lay there gasping, less than two yards beyond our reach, before the backwash carried him out again.

How could nature help Delaney now? I wondered—and then felt foolish when Carlson gave the obvious answer.

"Make a line fast to an oar, Van!"

Van cast the oar as far as he could. Once it was in the breakers, it flashed toward us. But it wasn't going to do Delaney any good. He was drifting to our right, and each time he rose, his strokes were weaker.

Carlson jerked off his pea jacket, cap and boots, and when the oar washed up on the shelf, he plunged into the surf, catching it before it was sucked out into the breakers. The oar thrashed wildly, and might have knocked out the mate if he hadn't slipped it free of the line. Carlson was old by ordinary standards, but he was strong and fresh and he had the line to help. Each time his head appeared, he was closer to Delaney. Finally the green water thinned to show us both the mate and seaman clinging to the line. It was all Van and Barrows could do to pull them through the surf, even though both men thrust with their feet and tried to help. But at last they were beyond the breaker line, in quieter water. The pair in the whaleboat pulled them out and helped them over the side.

Van immediately made another oar fast to the line, casting it overboard. It drifted so far up onto the shelf that one of the men was able to drag it onto the rocks, free the oar, and tie the end around my waist. They knew I was a poor swimmer.

The rope almost cut me in two as I was pulled against the fierce force of the breakers tumbling me heels over head. Holding my breath until I grew giddy, I was finally beyond the breaker line and able to suck air into my famished lungs. After being helped into the boat, there were five of us to haul in the next seaman, and each succeeding man rescued made the work quicker and easier.

But the plan had one serious defect, which Delaney discovered as the last man was being heaved over the gunwale.

"All our oars and even our tiller are ashore or adrift!" he exclaimed. "How are we going to get through that gap?"

"We can't have everything!" Carlson snorted. "Heave in on the anchor line, men!"

This was hard work, with the seas breaking in crashing plumes of spray over the rocks forming the two sides of the defile. Even in the inside basin the seas churned in heavy swells, rising and falling like molten metal in a caldron. After snubbing the last of the anchor line, Van looked questioningly at Carlson.

He waved to attract the rolling launch. The first mate waved back. Carlson tried to make Paulson understand that he wanted a line floated to us with a lifejacket, but it was several minutes before he understood.

After Paulson cast it overboard, it surged through the defile as through a millrace—making me feel pessimistic about our chances.

Carlson secured the line to our lifting-ring, and Van helped him heave in the anchor. The launch had straightened; now it bounded forward. It would be fatal if the lifting-ring pulled out; we didn't have even a boat-hook to fend us off the rocks of the defile.

Luckily we started straight along the channel, but the boat was moving from side to side like an aquaplane on a taut line. Before we were through, the seas crashed over the rocks, lifting us and swinging us starboard. We grated onto one of the Sisters, then started to roll port. The launch straightened us with a jerk that threatened to part the line. Then, with a lurch that snapped our heads, we slithered over the slippery seaweed and back into the gap. A moment later we crashed into a breaker that sent a sheet of water flying over us. When I blinked the salt spray from my eyes, we were through the defile, smacking the seas at the end of the still-intact towline.

Delaney, sitting on the boards at Carlson's feet, sighed with relief. His handsome face was blue with cold, his teeth chattered.

"I'm be-ginning to see what you mean, Mr. Carlson. M-making the b-breakers float oars and a lifejacket to us, instead of b-bucking it, is using natural forces instead of fighting them."

Carlson's light-blue eyes twinkled as he nodded.

Delaney's face sobered thoughtfully. "Maybe people are l-like that, Mr. Carlson. Make 'em w-work with you, and you'll g-get along. Buck 'em, and it's fight all the way."

The affection a father feels for a wayward son showed in the mate's hard-bitten face, giving me a clue to something Carlson had long known—for all their outward differences, he and Delaney were kindred spirits. They had bucked the current, each in his own way.

"It took me forty years to learn that, Delaney," Carlson said gently. "That's why I'm only a second bosun's mate."

"B-but one thing I don't g-get," Delaney went on. "I g-guess I've been a h-headache to you, Mr. Carlson. But you r-risked your life to save me."

"Hell!" growled Carlson, with a fleeting smile. "Barrows will someday be a quartermaster. Then I'll need a skookum coxswain."

SCORCHED EARTH

By

E. HOFFMANN PRICE

A Jim Kane Novelette

THE EDGE of the clearing was jammed with Moros wearing sarongs and turbans. Intently, forgetting even to chew and spit, they watched the close-order drill of a company of fellow guerrillas who wore Japanese uniforms and carried Arisaka rifles. As they saw it, they were getting ready for D-day, but Jim Kane, sitting on the veranda of General Datu Eric Ryan's bungalow, was sure that no one excepting Ryan himself knew what was actually cooking.

From spending some years as a surveyor, Kane inclined to the belief that a straight line was the shortest distance between two points, yet he had begun to realize that jungle geometry had a logic all its own.

Rest and food, high elevation and homemade quinine, these had whipped his malaria. Once more there was a sparkle in his eyes, and while his angular face was naturally thin, he no longer looked gaunt. *"Datu,"* he demanded, "what's cooking? And quit holding out."

But Datu Ryan ignored the query, as he had, day after day. Whatever connection there was between infantry drill and super-Victory gardens, he kept it to himself, and cocked a professional eye down the line as it went past. The mustard-green uniforms were patched and

sloppy at the best, but the bayonets gleamed and Kane needed neither level nor transit to confirm the perfection of alignment.

When the company was dismissed, they bolted for the clearing, shedding uniforms and equipment as they ran. Those who had been waiting dressed and armed themselves; and before Lieutenant Ximenes, one time Army aviator, could mop the sweat from his face, they had fallen in.

"So it's a Goldberg cartoon," Kane resumed, none too hopefully. "Everyone clearing a patch of jungle to plant corn and camotes gets an hour of infantry drill for a bonus. Now what's the answer?"

"Good leadership, Jim. If brass hats had any sense, they'd never have kicked me out."

RYAN wore a gilt cord on his campaign hat, and on his Chino khaki blouse the silver stars of a full general. His cordovan boots glowed, ruddy-black; the hand-wrought silver spurs glittered. Saber and Sam Browne belt completed the pre-war uniform of Eric Ryan, cashiered for striking his superior officer in the course of a personal wrangle.

After promoting himself from ex-captain to four-star general, Ryan had gone native, marrying not one, but four Mindanao ladies, each

One of the farmers cursed at Kane and whipped out a knife, holding it like a seasoned fighter.

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK KRAMER

the daughter of a Moro prince. As a final touch, he added to his staff an *aide de camp* to follow him about with a gilt-fringed yellow parasol, the symbol of Malay royalty.

Kane had begun to doubt that Ryan was even pixillated. He merely had a ferocious sense of humor which, first mocking both himself and the Army, later welcomed guerrilla warfare as a better outlet.

He snared Japanese officers guilty of atrocities, tried them by court-martial, executed them at the crossroads, and pinned on each a statement of charges. He made raids into Davao Province to hang Japanese hemp growers with the produce of their own plantations, on the ground that they were spies and fifth-columnists. And just the week previous, he had gone to Kolumbugan, down on the coast, to rob the Yokohama Bank. "Too much Skibby paper floating around makes for high prices," he solemnly explained. "Reducing the supply combats inflation."

As for making the Moros work and like it, that was, as Ryan had said, a matter of leadership; but he still hadn't explained why.

The yapping of dogs forestalled Kane's persistence. Two shock-headed pagans, escorted by *kris*-armed Moros, came across the clearing. The strangers were knotty-legged and not too bright looking. Their seeming sullenness was actually the shyness of very primitive people. They carried spears, and wore little more than G-strings.

"Page Bishop Jackson," Kane suggested. "They look like they'd come from a long way off."

Ryan listened to the visitors, and shook his head. "They're from Zambo, but damn if I can make out anything else. Oh, Bishop! Some of your converts! Come and talk to them."

"Yes, sir, General, right away!" a deep African voice answered.

A Negro the size of a boxcar came loping from the forest. In one hand he had a brush, in the other, a curry comb. His face, purple-black and gleaming with sweat, had not a wrinkle, though his hair was white.

"You still grooming Daniel-Come-to-Judgment?"

"Yes, sir! That hoss done carried me and the Gospel far and wide, and he needs a bit of care."

"Well, there are your parishioners."

"No, sir, they're pagans from Zambo."

It was good to see their faces glow when they saw the Bishop. "Can you beat it!" Ryan exclaimed. "Sailing across the Gulf and hoofing twenty-five miles to cry on his shoulder!"

After some minutes, the founder of the Mindanao Evangelical Church of the Pagan Tribes gave the substance of the news from Zamboanga Province.

"They say no one in town's got enough to eat. There's public feed stations and you line up for your smidgeon of rice on days when there is rice. The warehouses are jam-packed with it, only it's all going to Japan. These boys and their pappy and their grandpappy afore them been cutch-pickers, and now nobody buys cutch, and they ask me what to do."

"They raise their own grub. They don't look hungry," Ryan pointed out. "What if they can't sell their cutch?"

"That's gospel, General, but they get unhappy. They can't buy geegaws like they used to, they got no spending money."

Ryan twisted about, and called, "Tarhata! Bring me that money, a couple or three handsful of it!"

His Number Three wife, a shapely girl wearing a junk jewelry tiara, a scarlet formal, and high-heeled red slippers, came out with half a dozen packets of twenty-peso occupational bills. Ryan handed it to the Bishop. "Give them this."

"All of it?"

"Sure. And get me the truth about how bad it really is in Zambo."

Jackson questioned the pagans. After some minutes, he reported, "Going to be rioting and shooting if folks don't get more rice. Nobody in the *bondoks* totes rice to Zambo, account they'd rather eat it themselves. They can't buy nothing with the money they sell it for—nothing they really crave."

HE gave the pagans the wads of currency. They beamed, they glowed, they jabbered. Once convinced that Bishop Jackson meant what he said, they hurried for the forest to make camp. Shy beyond belief, they trusted no one but the big Negro who for the past forty years, ever since his honorable discharge from the United States Army, had gone among them with Bible and first-aid kit.

Kane grimaced perplexedly. "Bishop, if there's nothing to be bought in Zambo, what makes them so happy about money?"

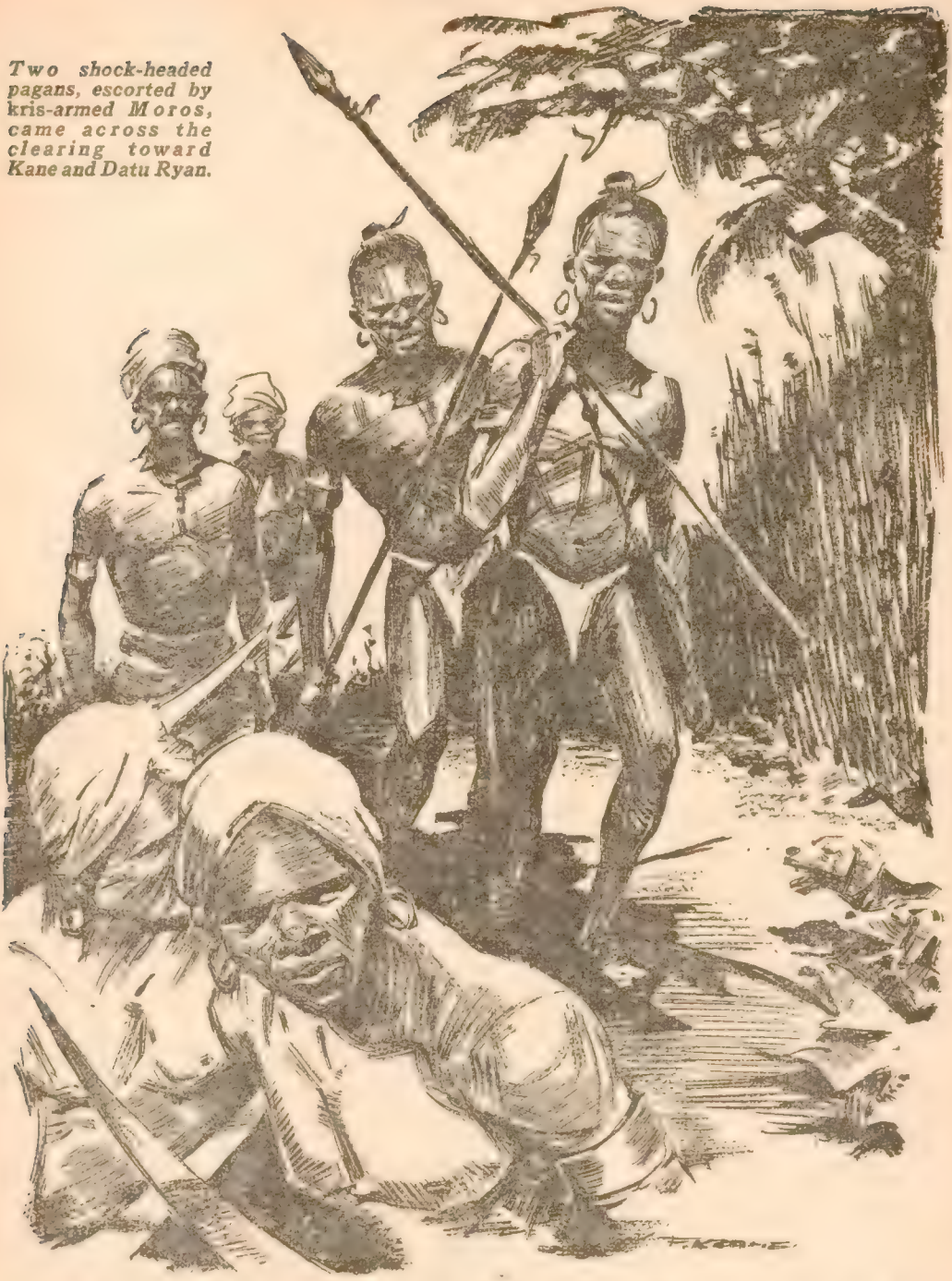
"Pickin' cutch is their life work. It says in the Good Book, the laborer is worthy of his hire. It jest hurts their feelings, no one buying cutch."

Ryan demanded, "What *is* cutch? What's it good for?"

The Bishop cleared his throat. "Cutch is a resin. It's powerful bitter, sort of drying up, like alum."

"Astringent?"

"Jest the word, General. Ain't nobody but a pagan got the patience to find the trees in the swamp and chop 'em down and cook it out." His black face twitched, his eyes crinkled up, he gulped, and then he broke down, howling with laughter which doubled him up and shook the jungle, frightening parrots and monkeys. "Scuse me, but— Cutch! When I hear it more'n so often it sounds silly, like it don't mean



Two shock-headed pagans, escorted by kris-armed Moros, came across the clearing toward Kane and Datu Ryan.

nothing. Only it do *mean* something. Yes, sir, it sure do. and them poor folks are unhappy about it!"

He went away, chuckling, repeating the word, and breaking out with fresh laughter.

Ryan turned on Kane. "All right, Jim. Now it can be told. What those natives say about rice shortage in Zambo checks with what we learned on the north coast. Something we don't get by radio. But you remember what we did get, a couple weeks back?"

Kane nodded. "Labor draft, men and women,

"That hoss done carried me and the Gospel far and wide and he needs a bit of care."

sixteen to sixty, all turn out for harvest and for planting fresh crops."

The Japs were worried. Though Tokyo still reported victories for the benefit of the Filipinos, the fall of Guam, the mopping up in New Guinea, and the repeated bombings of Palau made the Islands the next step. Once American troops got a foothold in Mindanao, plunder from the Dutch East Indies would be cut off. So, before the inevitable D-day, the Skibby was going to grab every grain of the ten million bushels of rice grown in Lanao and Cotabato Provinces.

"They need it, they need it damn bad," Ryan summed up. "And now that Hong Li has the transmitter going again, we can broadcast to the coast towns, pump them full of D-day pep. But it's a cinch we can't talk them into burning their crops."

"To quote the Bishop, that's gospel," Kane admitted. "Once the Skibbies tuned in on scorched earth, theyd send troops from Parang and Dansalan and—say, maybe that would be something!" He jumped up, eyes agleam. "Small detachments, we can take 'em! Build up our supply of ammunition, get enough that way for something serious."

Ryan caught his arm. "Sit down, sit down! You're right, as far as you go, but the people aren't with us any more. Quit kidding yourself."

For all his ferocious humor, the *datu* knew a fact when he saw it. After two and a half years of Japanese occupation, the people on the coast had learned that all they got from cooperation with guerrillas was severe reprisal when the raiders retreated into the inaccessible heights of the Buldun Mountains, or into the unexplored regions to the northeast and the southwest of Liguasan Marsh. They were resigned to Jap rule, particularly since it was indirectly exercised, through Filipino officials; it was bad, yet it could be worse.

"And you can't blame them," Kane carried on. "Sometimes I wonder if Hong Li's broadcasts about D-day's being on the way isn't just making them ease up, to wait for better times around the corner, when now's the time to raise hell."

The *datu* nodded. "We've got to get the town people fighting mad. And the only way to do that is to get the farmers to burn their rice. Starve the city people. Force them to riot, to break into warehouses, bust things wide open."

Kane shook his head. "That'd be about the same as if we machine-gunned the civilians ourselves. That's going too far."

Ryan made a sweeping gesture. "There aren't many of us left, are there? A slug in the guts hurts us as much as it does a civilian. Three out of every four of us having nothing but a *kris* or a *kampilan*. We're no better off than a *tao* with a bolo, are we? Maybe twenty rounds apiece for the Jap rifles, and then some muzzle loaders and shotguns charged with homemade powder. Quit crying about civilians. You're one, and you haven't done so bad."

"That's logic, *Datu*, only—"

"Only you're thinking of storybook war, the old-fashioned gentleman's war. Goddamn it, this is total war! Now that I've talked you into it, all you've got to do is go down into the valley and talk the *taos* into it. Don't tell me you can't! Look at me—I sold our Moros the idea of doing what they think is useless gardening."

CHAPTER II

"MOUNT THE WHIRLWIND"

THE endless, dragging seconds before the rifles whacked, and the Moros yelled, "Ahhhh. . . .*buguy!*" and closed in with *kris* and *kampilan;* the shaking hand, the wobbly legs, the tightness of throat and dryness of lips, during the moments just before the first sentry was taken out of action—

Jim Kane was no longer alarmed by preliminary shakes, for he had learned that even his Moro comrades had to nerve themselves for action. But now he was beyond forcing a grin, and he doubted Datu Ryan's contention that openly admitting you were scared witless was the best way to steady yourself for the business ahead.

Finally, there was nobody to talk to, except Doña Pilar, the shriveled old lady who for the time being was his mother. Since her son and her husband had died with their boots on, there was nothing left either to worry or frighten Doña Pilar.

They were following the trail which skirted the marsh and led toward Libungan Town. The woman, widow of the late governor of Cotabato Province, padded along behind Kane, balancing on her head a bundle of household gear. After what she had done, it kept Kane on edge trying to figure whether they or she ran the greater risk in venturing within ten miles of the provincial capital, chancing recognition by some collaborating Filipino who could do with the twenty thousand pesos offered for a guerrilla leader, alive or in identifiable pieces. Meanwhile, the late quisling's widow was part of his protective camouflage.

Kane's only weapon was a stumpy dagger thrust into the sash which topped his sarong. Doña Pilar had a bolo in her pack of household utensils, one of which it actually was, being food chopper, chicken-beheader, bamboo cutter, rattan splitter, and such. That she had finished off Captain Higashi with a single blow of it—thereby getting Kane out of, and herself into, a long-term jam—didn't alter the fact that a bolo was kitchen equipment.

Other men in sarongs plodded from the foothills overlooking the Cotabato Valley. While some had stopped at Highway One, just north of Libungan Marsh, quite a few continued downstream toward Libungan Town and the Cotabato River, their women and children tramping after them. Some of the men bound for the rice harvest wore ragged, knee-length pants and palm-fiber hats of mushroom shape. And from Dalawan came groups of sullen Moros, wearing black and red turbans. They didn't like to work for any man, much less by Jap command, but the times made them chew their hate and swallow it. The sight of these men made Kane feel better.

Ramón Silang, *presidente* of Libungan, was X in the equation Kane had set out to solve. Whether the answer was to be scorched earth or a one-way trip depended on Silang's courage, his influence and his attitude toward the Japs.

Although no one stared at Kane, he was so gripped by long sustained apprehension that his face was frozen. His legs moved mechanically, picking up his sandaled feet, and putting them down again. It was hard business going into action without the Black Bishop, or the wise-cracking Hong brothers, who were as handy with their shingling hatchets as with the cranky, homemade radio transmitter they kept going between raids. He missed Haji Maulana's chanting of the Holy Qur'an, and Lieutenant Ximenes' corny jokes in alleged English.

"Walk like a farmer," Doña Pilar warned, now that no pedestrians were near. "You're not going to a firing squad."

"That's what you think, *mamacita*!"

"Little Mother" had a touch of iron in her laugh. "Wait till your back breaks from cutting rice! Then you'll double up—you'll be a head shorter."

His height—that was what worried him, even though he had seen a number of Moros his equal in stature. Once in a while, along the coast, one saw the snuff-colored complexion and hair, the off-color eyes of foreign blood; and then there was the Arab and the Dyak strain, which made for taller stature.

TO ACT like a harvest hand and not arouse Malay curiosity—that was the tricky task with which Doña Pilar had come along to help him. He had all confidence in her wit and nerve, yet the approach was terrifying.

The rice fields had been drained. The air still steamed with their exhalation. The stalks were beginning to bend under the weight of the ripening heads; the green of the stalks was taking on a tinge of bronze which showed as they bent before the wind. And when that color became full golden-tawny with a mirrored metallic glint, the harvest would be ready. All this broad valley, and all the valleys lying north of the Buldun Mountains, would then be ready for the cutting and the threshing—ten million bushels of rice for Japan, less what little the farmers would be allowed to keep.

As Bishop Jackson had said, "They got to feed the farmers. Even a Jap knows it don't pay to muzzle the carabao what tramps out the grain."

The farmer would eat—and that was what made Kane's mission difficult. How persuade the *taos* to burn crops to spite the Japs? And with each step, he wished the chore could be done with stolen rifles, or with two-handed *kampilanes* forged out of metal from the improved smelter he had designed for the guerrillas.

"No damn wonder I got the shakes," he said to himself, when he was near the nipa shacks surrounded by bamboo and papaya trees, and gardens of maize and camotes. Carabaos lay in their wallows, with only nostrils and backward sweeping horns above the water. Scavenger dogs snarled under the houses, whose floors were six feet above the ground; razor-backed *babuis* grunted and rooted. Between cur and pig, garbage disposal was handled well enough.

A circle of *taos* squatted about two fighting cocks being put through their paces. A hand-powered sewing-machine clattered. Three sleek-haired girls haggled with the round-faced Chinese who ran the open-front *tienda*—though the shelves were uncommonly bare, with no canned salmon, hardly any calico, and no kerosene at all. But Ah Wang stayed in business. Whatever his name, he always stayed in business: the meek, the durable, the conquering Chinese, whose native land had absorbed army after army for two thousand years, making good Chinese of invaders they couldn't kill off.

THE merchant looked up from the three pert faces and flashed a narrowed-eyed glance at Kane. *"Mabuhay!"* he greeted, and Kane grunted an answer.

Then he wondered, Did I fool him? Do you ever fool a Chinese? But he didn't think I understood Spanish—he took me for a mountaineer and tried Malay.

Then Kane saw a trim little man wearing shantung coat and pants, and what remained of patent leather shoes. Rimless glasses added to his grave dignity.

"Buenos días, señor. Doubtless you are Don Ramón, the *presidente*? I kiss your hands. My mother and I, we hear that reapers are wanted. And it was ordered."

The glasses were not worn merely for prestige. The lenses made the pupils small, sharp pinpoints, so that there was no telling what their true expression was. His glance shifted to the bent and ragged woman who had once been the governor's wife in Cotabato Town, ten miles downstream, at the river's mouth. The old lady addressed him in studiedly halting Spanish.

"That is true," Silang said. "We need hands. Over there, you see *compadres*, they will help you make yourself a shelter. And God make it pleasant for you."

"And keep it so for you, *señor*."

A few bolo strokes, some bamboo, some thatch from the nipa palms, some flexible rattan, and a harvester's hut would be complete.

Kane now saw that earlier arrivals were building shelters for themselves, with shouting and laughter and song. Someone strummed a guitar. You can't plant the young rice shoots without music. You can't flick the small *yatab*, the traditional Malay knife whose use does not offend the spirit of the rice, nor ply the sickle without music.

Dark-eyed girls gave Kane generous looks. Doña Pilar retorted with Witch-of-Endor stares. Her job was to fend off unattached women, for girls and war don't mix; yet no normal native would ever dodge any lady with a smile in each eye, and for a grown man not to have a family needed an immediately visible accounting, or he'd become an object of curiosity. He didn't know what Doña Pilar would say or do, but it would take feminine wit to make it convincing.

Four sociable Moros helped Kane build a shelter. Facing their scrutiny was far trickier than fooling Japs. He hoped the outcropping of sweat was taken as the result of exertion. As for his speech, that's the way they talked in the Buldun hills.

"How is the *presidente?"* Kane asked.

"Silang? For an infidel," came the Moslem to Moslem answer, "not bad. We get along with him. But you're a long way from home."

That meant, why didn't you stop at some nearer estate? The whole valley's solid with rice, twenty miles wide and fifty miles deep. Kane answered, "Voyaging is victory."

Stick to proverbs, you don't make slips. Someone countered, "Yes, but travel is a small death," and that settled it. Adage for adage, and the peace upon us all.

Then while Doña Pilar, some hours later, was squatting before the fire in the wickiup, cooking rice, Ramón Silang came up to Kane, and gestured furtively, a head-toss instead of a hand motion.

"Be pleased to see me tonight. My house is over there. Then tell me who you are, and why you come."

And he walked on, without waiting for an answer.

Doña Pilar said, "If he plans trouble, he'd surely not do anything as unusual as inviting you to call." She hitched over, until she could see the *presidente's* house through a gap in the banana hedge. "Is it to such a place that one asks a hill Moro to call?"

Silang lived in a house built of wood. Its windows were of translucent shell panes. While not pretentious, it loomed over the bamboo shacks of the *barrio*, showing clearly how important the *presidente* was.

On his way to see Silang, that evening, Kane went to Ah Wang's shop to buy cigarettes and some coconut meat candied in molasses.

The Chinese had a Filipino wife; Kane could hear her talking to one or more children in the rooms behind the shop. However, she was busy, and there were no customers in sight. Kane asked the moon-faced merchant, "What sort of man is Ramón Silang?"

The plump face and beady eyes did not change expression. "You work in the harvest?"

"If I like these farmers, yes."

Ah Wang smiled. "To know a dish, you taste it."

Kane retorted, "Need one eat a sack of rice to know how rice tastes?" He pawed over the candy, which was in pieces about the size of a stick of dynamite. After a bamboo tube had been lined with palm leaves, the sticky mixture was rammed home, in layers, somewhat like shotgun wadding; once solidified, it was punched out, wrapper and all. On finding the

heaviest chunk, Kane returned to the subject of Señor Silang.

"I do not understand these lowland people. But up there"—he gestured to the north—"there are Chino traders. Those I understand."

"Then," said Ah Wang, clasping his hands, and bobbing his head, "you know that a man looks forward, not sidewise."

"Very well, I'll talk straight! If these people are Jap-lovers, I do not work for them. Lim Ah-Jun says you talk straight, and don't talk too much. He has gold teeth, so he keeps his mouth shut before strangers. There's no gold in your teeth. Why are you afraid?"

"*Ai*, you know Lim Ah-Jun, yes. Very nice man. You want cigarette? Got Alhambras, but no more when this is gone."

Kane bought a pack. Ah Wang continued, "Nice river." He pointed to the Cotabato, which crawled sluggishly seaward. "You watch. River all the time flowing, never gets empty. Sea all the time taking, never gets full."

KANE heard the laughter of villagers bathing at sunset, and the splash-slap-splash of women washing sarongs. Presently, there was the putt-putt-putt of a launch coming upstream.

The merchant flashed a narrow-eyed glance at Kane. "Mabuhay!" *he greeted, and Kane grunted.*

Don Ramon's glasses made his pupils small pinpoints and there was no telling their expression.

Ah Wang's smile widened perceptibly. "Japanese teacher-man. All the time talk about right living, with movies. His name, Kiyoshi Furukawa, teaching everybody, all the way to Reina Regente. You go, very nice."

The launch throttled down. Kane caught a glimpse of the floating propaganda department. She flew the Philippine Commonwealth's colors, but the characters on her bow were Japanese.

He could not see the man in the cockpit, as slanting light was mirrored by the cockpit's glass. Then the engine revved up, and she put out into midstream again. Apparently Mr. Furukawa, after yielding to habit, had remembered that he had business elsewhere.

Kane picked up his purchases. By way of farewell, Ah Wang said, "It is easy to make an axe-handle; the model is always before you."

This, as Kane saw it, was the Chinese equivalent of the quip about the instructions for pouring bran out of a boot always being written on the sole. And while Mr. Furukawa was now moving upstream, there was that matter of the lasting, lingering flavor of his former visits.

At Kane's approach to his wickiup, the girls who chattered with Doña Pilar left, and they kept their eyes to the front. "How is that, Little Mother?" he asked. "What scared them away?"

The black eyes twinkled. "I said that my son had taken an oath, but I did not say what kind. The uncertainty, you understand."

"Saint, *juramentado*, or what?"

"I don't know. The doubt makes it better. They don't know what you're consecrated for, so they take no chances."

Nor would Christian or Moslem ask him why he had taken an oath. When Allah has spoken to a man, it is not for general publication.

Men eyed him with interest as he went to Silang's house, but without any apprehension. Playing the maternal dragon, Doña Pilar had done a good job.

Kane was scarcely inside the hedge of bananas and papayas when Don Ramón came down the steps to meet him—a courtesy that could be two-edged as a *kris*. When they were in the house, the master having been the first to cross the threshold—the Moro, not the Spanish way—he said, "My family is not here."

Only then were the formalities of meeting resumed and finished.

The vegetable-oil lamp flickered and smoked. There was no more kerosene for sale, another Co-Prosperity symptom. Kane could not tell what manner of furnishing the *presidente's* house had, nor what its shadows held, though he did distinguish, in one corner, a radio, and the dull glint of polished kemagon wood.

Abruptly, Silang began, "Doña Pilar's only son died when outlaws ambushed his constabulary company. Why do you claim to be her son?"

"That is a strange saying. I am Yussuf. My mother's name is Amai, and when was I one of the constabulary?"

Don Ramón gravely considered the counter-query before he said, "Let it pass, and I can be mistaken, but the governor's widow left suddenly and did not return for Don Artemisio's funeral. I do not know of any price on her head. Still it would not go well with her if she were recognized. Whatever she is to do, it would be better if she did it elsewhere. In Lanao, for instance."

"Because there is more rice in Lanao than here?"

The dark eyes sharpened, the brows flattened. "She must know that all Don Artemisio's property was appropriated for the public good. She is not one to be pleased by this, not after what happened to her son and to her husband."

"My mother is a grown woman, and strong willed."

"Why do you want to work here?" Don Ramón pressed.

"Why do you want to harvest your crop?" Kane used the highest form of Asiatic logic, a question against question. "How much of it will you eat?"

"One prays for daily bread, and would you curse God for giving only half a loaf?"

"Are the Japs God?" Then, seeing Don Ramón's face change, Kane carried on, "Curse them with fire, let them stuff their bellies with ashes. Burn your crop!"

"Would all the others set their fields afire? Whoever you are, are there enough of you to

convince each *presidente,* each landlord, each *tao* with his tiny field? If there are—" He made a time-worn gesture with his upturned hands: Here's the baby, call him Fulano, and have done with it.

"Fire spreads, and so do ideas. There are never enough of us, so you must help," Kane urged.

"What would we eat then? For lack of bullets, can we cut our own heads off to throw them at the enemy?"

"You and I are Children of the Book. Christian and Moslem, the same God, the same prophets. You say it in your way, we say it in our way, but here it is: If you mount the whirlwind to fly from your bread, your bread will mount the lightning and overtake you! Is your faith less than mine? Does God love us, and hate you?"

"You mountain people would share your food, what there is of it, but there are too many of us," Don Ramón contended. "Granted that you eat rocks, there aren't even enough of *them* to go around! Me, I am for you—I am, truly—but if we burn our rice fields, and even if we prove it was accidental, we still have to buy from those whose crops did not burn. Listen, Yussuf, a *juramentado* dies gladly because he trades one life for many lives. But you can't make a *juramentado* out of all men. And there are women in this too, don't forget. And where can we go from here?"

"To hardship of the worst, Don Ramón. American sewing-machines, cigarettes, radios, schools—they've taken the courage from you coast people."

"That is true. We will no longer die without cause, or for no result. So many will fail that those who burn their fields will be only a few fools, lucky to escape, after having done a useless thing."

I think I've got him, Kane rejoiced to himself. He wants to, but he's scared to death. He's defending himself now, sweating to prove he's right.

Don Ramón mopped his face. He twisted in his chair.

Kane stared, letting his eyes go out of focus, until he barely saw Don Ramón. He thus won a relentless, unblinking gaze, more intent than if he had looked his man straight in the eye.

"If I knew that others would be with me, yes. But tell me what good there is in burning our crops."

Though Kane was tempted, he got up and shrugged.

"Don Ramón," he said, "you were born alone, without any comrade. And a man dies alone. With all his family about him, not one can take that step with him. The two important things are done alone. But since you want company for unimportant things—peaceful tarrying!"

Kane bowed, and walked out.

Dark-eyed girls gave Kane generous looks, to which Doña Pilar retorted with Witch-of-Endor stares.

CHAPTER III

THE MISSING SPY

ALL the following day, Kane felt as though he had been staked over an ant-hill. Having tipped his hand, he could only sit tight and wait for Don Ramón's decision. Meanwhile, the *presidente* might get in touch with the Japs.

A cart trail, following the river, led down to Cotabato, and upstream to Balung, Liong, and finally, to Dalawan. Much of the traffic, however, was by water.

Forced labor had drained some of the southern fringe of the marsh. Ditches had been dug to bring water from the stream which came from the hills south of Tawiran. A slough joined the two rivers. To the Japs, all those low-lying acres, drained and steaming in the sun, were rice; to Kane, they were a trap if any collaborator learned of his mission. Terraced fields, a network of canals and dykes—no jungle, no refuge anywhere, except the Libungan Marsh, seventy square miles of reeds and canebrakes, narrow bayous, a steaming hell infested by crocodiles.

All this worried Kane as he sat, Moro-fashion, on his heels, spitting and chewing, listening to the gossip of the men from Dalawan. Since gravity and silence betokened wisdom, he sat tight, but without seeming unsociable.

"It is said," one of the Moros contributed, "that the iron birds blew up a Jap ship, only three hours' sailing from the east coast."

"Praise Allah, they are in hell," another ob-

served. "But who told you of this, O Man?"

"The talking box in Dalawan, though Allah is the Knower. And there were sea fights, far, far to the east, many Americanos blowing up the monkey men's ships."

"That is strange. Since when has any Americano killed a Jap, on land or sea?" He turned to Kane. "What say you, Yussuf?"

He pondered, puckered his brow, spat, and made a grimace to display his betel-blackened teeth; whatever else these fellows thought, they'd know him for a veteran chewer. "Victory comes from Allah," Kane answered, finally, with the gravity of one announcing a great truth.

"Praise to His Name!" a pious old fellow exclaimed.

Bright eyes, peering from a face puckered like a dried prune, made Kane think of Haji Maulana, the school teacher who had turned guerrilla. It was thanks to Haji's coaching for previous missions that he knew Moslem etiquette.

"But how is it," the original questioner resumed, "that these fathers of little pigs admit defeats? Yea, the voice in the box spoke of great slaughterings on land."

Hong Li's jerry-built radio, broadcasting on a reasonable facsimile of Tokyo wavelength, had been pouring it into them again. Kane answered, "Hew them and burn them enough, they begin to tell the truth, though Allah is the Knower."

As the day wore on, Kane's spirits rose. If the worst came to the worst, he might count on assistance; he might even find some assistant firebrands to carry on if he had to run out. Still, hostages must have been seized by the Jap garrison at Fort Pikit, or else not a Moro would have come to work.

Later, Ramón Silang found Kane apart from his companions and said to him, "Tonight the leading farmers will meet at my house. Then you will tell them why you think this thing should be done. Tell them what good it will do, how it will really hurt the Jap."

"*Señor presidente,* do you believe?"

"Yes, but can I command this thing done?"

"Can I speak with more force than you, the biggest land owner? Will they believe me rather than you?"

Silang smiled, shook his head. "I am too old for flattery. You do not look unlike certain Moros I have seen. To see you with those wild men over there, you are a Moro of Moros. You have a nose like that tall and terrible outlaw the Americans hunted down when I was a boy. Yet you are not what you seem."

"What am I, Don Ramón?"

"A guerrilla, one of Datu Ryan's men. Who else would shelter the governor's widow? She is *muy gente fino.* And he, God give him peace, was *muy valiente.* The old lady is a dangerous guest. A Moro might come to spy for killing and plunder, but would he come with a woman who could make him so much trouble?"

"Truth is with God."

"And you are more than you seem. Otherwise, when I called her name, you would have cut me down and run. Or you would have left."

"Guerrillas have been pests, they've caused trouble aplenty."

Ramón Silang nodded. "Hated somewhat for those troubles, yet respected, too. And my people would listen. Or do you fear a trap?"

"Dealing with me," Kane answered, "puts you into equal danger. So I trust your heart, though I take no chances on your mistakes."

"That is good. But last night you used hard words."

"I wouldn't explain because without belief and faith, my reasons wouldn't count."

"Very well, Yussuf. The Americans are coming nearer. They are cutting the Japs to pieces. An outlaw radio tells us of those battles. Why should we face reprisal and starvation when before many months MacArthur will land?"

"Because the nearer the Japs are driven toward their home, the easier it is for them to defend themselves, and the harder it is for the Americans to bring up extra force. The *tao* can't understand these things. You, a man of education, can. The Jap has to be hit with everything—by land, by sea, by air, and also by hunger and by trouble from within Mindanao! He robs you so that he can feed his hungry workers at home. The burning of this valley's crop will hurt him far worse than the butchering of many regiments. You don't have guns, but you do have fire."

"That is true, Yussuf. Still—"

KANE carried on. "Soldiers, American and Filipino, faced hardships, hunger, bullets, to free your rice fields. Are you better than they? Just because you're civilians, is your right to live any greater than theirs?"

"You are right," Silang admitted. "But will the burning hurt as much as you say?"

"With rice riots in Cotabato and Zamboanga, the entire island is useless right at the time the enemy needs all the produce, all the shipping. If we burn only the mouth of the valley, the rumor of it will start trouble in the cities. The only reason there aren't riots already is that the town people are waiting for the harvest. Take that hope from them and the seaports will explode, the lumber mills, the fisheries, everything will be useless. Right when the Jap needs peace, he'll get a knife.

"Bad for him even if MacArthur doesn't land in a few months. Far worse, fatal, if the Americans did arrive to hit a disorganized island."

Don Ramón drew a deep breath. "I believe all this. But starving, that's harder to face than bullets."

Kane scooped some earth into his folded turban and when he had finished, he had a small, hard sausage with a handle of cloth.

"Go into the hills. You Christians can eat wild pigs, which we Moslems won't touch. You can eat fern tops, camotes, and there's more *secano* rice in the mountains than you realize. What'll you eat if you stay here? Only a Jap-lover will eat, from now on. And you tell this to your people."

"You won't come to the meeting?"

"No."

"Why not, Yussuf?"

"If your people refuse to listen, at least they'll not betray you. But with a stranger, that is otherwise, and I must go to other *barrios.* When the council is over, tell me the decision, so I can go on. Fire has to start in all quarters at once, and the fields are drying."

That night, Doña Pilar tickled Kane's ear with a straw until he awakened. He sat up on his palm leaf mat and asked, "Has the meeting started?"

"The fifth man just went in," she answered. "That accounts for all the important land-owners. But tell me, what was your other reason for not talking to them—the real reason?"

"Don Ramón believed the one I gave."

"Answer me, or I'll box your ears!"

"I'm afraid of Filipino politeness. Don Ramón is sincere. With me in the house, they'd not disagree with him. They'd promise me anything, out of respect to him. So I want to overhear their real thoughts."

"And if those are wrong, we leave at once?"

"If they're just timid and chicken-hearted, they'll get in line when fires start elsewhere. If they're hostile, we'd better know it. After all, there's been a Jap lecturer here."

"The man in the launch?"

"Yes. He may have talked them into accepting the extortion they're going to face. He may have promised them enough rice for family use. All that will come out tonight."

"*Vaya con Dios,*" the old lady said. Because of the gloom, Kane could not see her face, so he did not guess what Doña Pilar was thinking. He gave his turban scarf a quick twist, and crept out into darkness unbroken by any moon.

Kane glanced up at the stars. Though there were neither voices nor music, it was earlier than he had thought. Nevertheless, he moved stealthily, as the hill men had taught him.

Once a dog snarled sleepily, and once a chicken beneath some house made a drowsy chirping. Then, with the shelter well behind him and the smell of the marshes full in his nostrils, there came a new sound: a muted mumbling that was hardly to be distinguished from the distant sound of palms lightly touched by breeze. This was the voice of furtive debate.

As he wormed between the banana stalks whose broad leaves hedged the *presidente's* house, Kane smelled Silang's horse and heard the shaggy animal's sudden intake of breath. Kane stopped. The breeze against his face, bringing with it the blended odor of animal and swamp, told him that the horse could scarcely have scented him. No one was openly approaching. He waited for dragging seconds, trying vainly to hear what had disturbed the horse.

Fireflies floated, glowing blue-white, like ghost lanterns far off, moving slowly. Then,

near the ground in the gloom beneath the house, in the space next to that occupied by the *presidente's calesa,* he saw a phosphorescence which after some seconds of immobility, made an abrupt, short motion. This gleam, like and also unlike that of a firefly, betrayed the hidden prowler.

"Someone," he told himself, "is auditioning a lecture course on scorched earth. Looks like I have competition."

So Kane settled down to stalking his man.

He had the short, thick-bladed dagger, but if ever there had been a time when he did not want to open anyone by mistake, this was it. He took off his turban cloth, folded it, then scooped up some earth and packed it into a pocket shaped from the cloth. When he had finished twisting and kneading, he had a small, hard sausage of earth and gravel with a pigtail of cloth long enough to wrap once around his hand, for a firmer grip.

Kane held his breath, and stalked as though he had to kill at the first attempt. Against the scent of harness and manure, he caught the cosmetic stench of the lurker; the perfume kept him from knowing whether the man was Filipino or Jap.

THROUGH the floor, he could clearly hear voices. There was Spanish, and sometimes a phrase repeated in Mindanao dialect.

". . .what would we eat, *por Dios!* . . . these *chingados* of guerrillas! . . . They do the damage and leave us to face the trouble. . ."

Then Ramón Silang's voice came in strong. "But we might as well starve in the hills! We're going to go hungry anyway! That warehouse full of rice in Cotabato is to be shipped out. The harbor master. . ."

Good old Silang! Kane gathered himself. *And now you—you snooping son!*

Whop! He hit the crouching man at the base of the skull. Toppling over without any sound, he lay there, face down, left hand motionless, without a flicker of the luminous watch dial.

Kane quickly went through the lurker's pockets, and found what he at first took for two fountain pens. One was a small searchlight. He flicked it on and saw he had bagged a Jap dressed in dark shantung. The spy, taking off his shoes, had carried them by the knotted laces.

Kane thrust the wallet and papers into his sash. With his knife he slashed strips from the Jap's shirt to make a gag; he used suspenders and pieces of pants to bind the snooper.

The *presidente* was having hard going, up there on the main floor. The floor vibrated from the voices of men speaking of suicidal stubbornness and the futility of scorched earth. One voice, less guarded, was insistent, metallic, the tone of one who had no fear of the firing squad the company risked by even gathering together to debate such a dangerous subject.

"Not so loud, Gregorio, for the love of God! If we go against this thing, we want not even any talk of our having talked!"

But Gregorio, though lowering his voice, remained unshaken.

Kane emptied the hard-packed earth from his turban cloth and covered his head again. He tied the Jap to a support of the house, using a strangle hitch, so that the least struggle would cut the prisoner's wind. That done, he hurried back for a word with Doña Pilar, told her what had happened, and explained what she was to do when the time came. Then, since the spy's presence had upset all Kane's scheme, he hurried back to Silang's house and stealthily went up the front steps.

He tapped smartly. Men gasped and scrambled in haste. "By your leave, *señores!*" He twisted the knob, thrusting the door inward. "Please wait. It is too late to go."

Their amazement and his assurance checked them. Half a dozen men, none as well-dressed as Ramón Silang, had jumped to their feet. Two had their shirt tails flopping out, *camisa de chino;* all wore shoes, though aside from Don Ramón and one other, the footgear was homemade.

"What is this?" the *presidente* demanded.

The flickering light cast shadows which hardened Kane's face alarmingly. He kept his hand ready to draw the knife whose haft peeped from his sash.

"In the name of all the saints, shut the door!" the man next to Don Ramón demanded.

Kane recognized that metallic voice. "With happiness, Don Gregorio."

The flicker of amazement proved that the guess had been good.

"Do not worry, this is Yussuf," Silang said. "You come on us silently. Why is this?"

"I could not wait. What is the word, Don Ramón?"

The *presidente's* glance flashed from eye to eye. He read the faces, and answered, "I am for it, but unless we are all together, it is bad. They are against me."

Gregorio smiled, and sat down. "By your leave, Don Ramón. Now that the man is here, let us hear him."

The others remained standing. They sweated, they fidgeted, they eyed the door. Surprise had given them a vision of future raids.

Don Ramón shook his head, ruefully, yet with visible relief. "It is dangerous. No one is with me, and what can I do alone? Inspectors have been checking up on stocks of privately-owned rice and seed-rice. Anyone with too large a supply is brought before a military commission for attempting to speculate."

Kane countered, "There's going to be shortage anyway! Hit first like men, and then starve. Grovel like *babuis,* and you still starve!"

The timid four fingered the brims of their hats. Silang's son, a handsome lad of twenty, flared up. "Whoever you are, get out quickly, while you can, I beg of you!"

Kane folded his arms. "Let your father order me out."

Their timidity was not personal. As between one man and another, they had courage, and his arrogance made their nostrils flare. Hernán Silang caught his father's arm. One of the farmers cursed, whipped out a knife, holding it point foremost, like a seasoned fighter.

While Kane could handle steel with the best of them, a quarrel was the last thing he wanted—yet he knew no mountain Moro, such as he was supposed to be, would ever let a mission stand between him and a challenge.

He whipped off his turban with his left hand, flicked the folds about his forearm as he drew his dagger. "By your permission, Don Ramón!" And to the farmer, "You, or all of you, at once! I am Yussuf, and your families will think of me when you are gone."

"I beg of you!" Don Ramón protested. "Put up your knives, you fools!"

"By your order!" the challenger answered. "But ask him to leave. He does us no good, he does himself harm."

Then Gregorio Tugab interposed, smilingly, "Sit down, do us the honor. Let us hear more, Yussuf. Take my chair, as a favor."

The others were shaky, even as Kane himself had been at his first hanging—that of the first spy to fall into Datu Ryan's hands. So he said, "You have no more choice. You are in this because an enemy has forced you in, and if you do not act with me, see if you can save yourselves alone. God can help you, no one else can."

"What do you mean?" Gregorio Tugab's voice rose. "How is this?"

"Knife my back and I'll not show you—and when you find what I found, it will be too late."

He turned his back on them and stalked to the door. They followed him, without speaking.

ONCE beside the house, Kane flicked on the flashlight. The Jap, having got an expertly delivered sample of concussion, was still unconscious. The spectators, seeing him, were for an instant in little better shape than the prisoner. "*Sus-mari' Josep!*" one gasped, and crossed himself. And another, "*Ay, chingado!* We're dead men!" And Silang's son exclaimed, "Furukawa! My God, he was going up the river! How did he get back?"

The *presidente* groaned, then pulled himself together, straightened up, spread his arms in a commanding gesture. "Yussuf, how did this happen?"

"He can't get away," Kane answered. "Let's go back into the house, we mustn't wake your neighbors. Furukawa was listening when—"

As he spoke, low-voiced, he herded them before him, taking the initiative from Ramón Silang. Once indoors, Kane told how he had noted the firefly flicker and had investigated. "I had changed my mind, Don Ramón. I felt that I should be there to face the men I invited into danger. So I hit this *babui*, not knowing who it was, but knowing that whoever hid, listening, could not mean well."

"But we talked against scorched earth," Gregorio Tugab declared.

Kane eyed him: a self-assured, wholly unshaken man, with a pockmarked face, and a nose which was somewhat broader than the average Filipino's. "You are the only brave man here," Kane said. "But that may be ignorance. Having to talk against scorched earth means that there were some in favor of it. Tell me, Don Ramón"—dismissing Tugab, he turned on the *presidente*—"Do you know whether this Jap was actually making a lecture trip? If so, why would he expect to hear something at this house?"

"It is late, and light leaks. He could have seen, from the river. Going downstream, with little power, to save gas."

A farmer in a pink *camisa de chino* said, "Kill the spy, or we're dead men!"

Danger had huddled them together. Prodded by that one suggestion, the sweating farmers swayed as a mass. Kane sidestepped to the door. He had to give Doña Pilar time enough to do her work.

"Cutting his throat may not be the best. Blood is hard to hide. So is a corpse. Any suspicion at all, and—"

Young Silang's face was tense with resolution. "They will still miss him. A few of us will run away—that will admit guilt, and will protect those who stay. Let us draw lots."

"Only one or two should leave," Kane pointed out. "More than that would make it seem that the entire *barrio* was conspiring. Let me go, and—" He glanced at the pockmarked man. "Don Gregorio, who is cool and steady, as if he had no family."

"That is right," someone said. "Gregorio, your cousin in Cotabato wouldn't be held, and you have no other living kin."

"I wanted none of this!" Gregorio Tugab declared. "Take one of those who were so anxious to starve!"

"Cast lots," the man in the pink shirt said.

Hernán Silang felt the biting stares of those who blamed him for his father's sake. "I'd go with Yussuf," he told them, "except that if the *presidente's* family is involved, the whole *barrio* is damned, do you understand?"

"*Por Dios*, he is right! *Señor presidente*, you must stay clear to protect us."

"Yes, even though you did get us into this!" one grumbled.

Kane whirled on the speaker. "I, Yussuf, did

this thing. It is on my head, not his. Quarrel with me."

Then, observing that the man wanted no dispute with an oversized mountaineer, Kane brought the wrangle to a close, for by now, Doña Pilar must have done what had been planned.

"Get Furukawa out of the *barrio*, well away, and then—" He made a slicing gesture whose meaning was clear. "Come, all of you. We are together in this."

"One little moment," Gregorio Tugab interposed. "I was a fool, because we are worried. Let me and Yussuf take the spy with us, and it will be well with the rest of you. Now that it has come to this, little things don't count. Burn the fields. It is the brave thing, as Don Ramón said. . . Tell me, Yussuf, do you belong to the Katipunan?"

"What the Katipunan did to the Spaniards in the old days," Kane answered, "could be done to the Japs today, but whether or not I am a member is not the question."

The result of his evasion was to convince the farmers that he was indeed a member of that secret society which, organized in 1875 by Andrés Bonifacio, set out to liquidate Spanish oppressors wherever found; and out of the Katipunan came the revolt which upset the Spanish government and put Aguinaldo in command.

"There are other questions," Kane went on. "And I know no one I'd rather have go with me, Señor Tugab." Which was the truth, since that changeable man, left in the *barrio*, would hopelessly ruin whatever favorable decision the others might make.

They all followed Kane and Tugab out of the house.

And this time there was a cry of horror: the Jap was gone. On the ground lay ankle bonds, cut as by a sharp knife. Clearly, they had not been broken or frayed.

Kane picked up the fragments. "Rake the ground, leave no trace. Now all of us must leave."

Tugab protested, "How would Furukawa know who was in the room?"

"He couldn't possibly have counted the number, of course!" the *presidentē* said sarcastically. "Unless that number is gone, it will be bad."

"I was only trying to be helpful," Tugab explained.

"Not a word to your families," Kane warned. "The less anyone knows, the better. I have friends north of the swamp. Strong friends, many of them."

The farmers began to understand: a guerrilla, as they had suspected.

Kane went on, "But we've got to see if Furukawa's launch is near the *barrio*. He may have left it upstream, and slipped down in a *banca* to do his spying."

CHAPTER IV

THE SEVEN KNIFE-THRUSTS

THEY found Furukawa's launch a short distance upstream from the *bancas* belonging to the village. The engine was stone cold. That, and the fact that Doña Pilar had not heard the approach of the boat made it clear that the Jap had drifted downstream. This was clinched when Kane found the bamboo with which the spy had poled his launch ashore.

"Wherever he was," Kane told the farmers, "he would let no one know he left, otherwise someone could have followed him along the trail, got here ahead of him and warned you."

There were cans of film and a cable to reach from the launch to the projector when he set up his portable screen. A locker was filled with Co-Prosperity handbills, as well as enrollment cards for the Rizal Youth Movement, the Jap version of Hitler's Junior Nazi Corps. "These are new," Don Ramón said. "So far, Furukawa just lectured on cooperation."

The handbills were blurbs on "preparing the younger brother for independence," "release from American tyranny," "Asia for Asiatics." All this was given flimsy substance by the use of the names of Rizal, Mabini, Andrés, Bonifacio, Filipino patriots who had lived and died fighting Spanish oppression.

"You see, Don Ramón? Unless the older people sacrifice everything, the younger ones will believe these lies. Every disorder, every riot, every burned field, whether an acre or the entire valley, shows that there are some who don't believe these lies! You who go with me tonight, Christians going with a Moslem, we are following Rizal and the others! Not as Christians, not as Moros, but as Filipinos!"

And they loved that; it gave them a heroic glow. The fatality of grim decision made them overlook one point which Kane had to keep them from seeing—that Furukawa might have followed an intuition and his spying might not have been done on orders from headquarters.

So they poled the launch up the stream, which, coming from the north, met the Cotabato at right angles. The Libungan Marsh was at their right as they moved against the current.

Quite aside from the sound of the exhaust, which might have aroused restless sleepers in the *barrios* along the tributary, there was the matter of speed. Going under power would have put Kane and his companions ahead of Doña Pilar and the Jap.

As they moved in darkness alive with mosquitoes, Kane pictured that hatchet-faced Filipina plodding along, her captive before her. She had him with a noose around his neck attached to a four-foot length of bamboo, which she held in her hand and which kept him from turning on her, or from trying to run. He was

quite helpless thus and a child could have killed him. Kane hoped that Doña Pilar would not think too much of her dead son, and of her quisling husband who, seeing at last how he had been tricked into believing that collaboration was for the good of his people, had led a Japanese regiment into an ambush from which not a man escaped: he had died with a bullet fired into the back of his head, and then his Jap murderers had gone down before the musketry and steel of lurking guerrillas.

Kane needed Furukawa alive.

As they poled upstream, he heard the occasional splash and the bellow of a crocodile. The fifteen-foot reptiles were a round-the-clock menace. Whatever came within their reach had either to eat, or be eaten. When a hunter wounded one, the others turned on the victim to tear him to pieces. Comrade and enemy looked alike, and blood was blood; the smell of it whipped them to insensate fury.

Finally, nearing the lake at the head of the marsh, the stream swung to the left. Not far ahead was Highway One and the foothills of the Buldun Mountains.

"Now we go ashore," Kane said, "for a little way. Friends are waiting."

They made the launch fast, and set out like men tiptoeing through a graveyard. Their worry, Kane's assurance, and their growing realization that he was more than an oversized hill Moro, had made them accept his leadership. Finally he found the landmark and proposed a rest.

Insects buzzed maddeningly. The crocodiles made their sullen, booming roar. Even to those still on firm ground, the marsh had its terror; the voices told of snouts that could upset a *banca,* jaws which could crush it and shear in half the occupants. It was not a pleasant place, even by daylight.

"This is better than you know," Kane told the farmers. "When the monkey-men are driven out of the island and you can return, you'll be leaders, big men."

One said, "You are one of Datu Ryan's men, the mad Americano who became a Moslem."

"Datu Ryan will make fighting men of you."

"I'd not mind the army, but *por Dios,* that is different! That Ryan is crazy."

"They have to hunt him down—they've lost face."

"Suit yourselves," Kane retorted. "Go home if you want. But don't worry, Datu Ryan never forces people to fight. You can hoe the gardens."

THEY needed refuge worse than they needed outlet for their increasing woe or worry, so they followed, and with each step, they became more used to his leading.

Finally, he called another halt. "Wait."

He whistled softly. There was an answer-

Doña Pilar released her hold just enough so that the spy could speak. The Jap's eyes were crafty.

ing whistle. He went on alone. The murmur behind him, half of dread, half of eagerness, told him that they fully expected Ryan's guerrillas to pounce from cover.

Uptrail some distance, he found Doña Pilar and her prisoner. She released the hold just enough so that the spy could speak. Kane played the small flashlight on the man's face.

The Jap had keen features, and despite the three hours or more of being kept just short of outright strangulation, his face was only a little swollen and flushed. His eyes were steady, his mouth tight. Whatever else he might be, Furukawa was a brave man.

"Who told you to come to Libungan?"

The Jap's eyes were all alive and crafty, though he could not be ignorant of his danger. He answered, "My orders come from my superior, from whom else?"

"That is not true, Kiyoshi Furukawa. You went upstream with an engine making noise, and you came very near landing at Libungan last night, but went on. Now tonight you came back without sound. Why that change of plan? Who told you to change it?"

"I do as ordered."

"Tie him over an ant-hill," Doña Pilar said. "He'll talk."

"Furukawa, do you want to deal with her, or with me?"

"Do as you please. Release me, or it will be bad for the people of Libungan."

"Someone in Libungan told you to come back and listen at the *presidente's* house. Who was it?"

Furukawa stared blankly.

"Are you sure it is worthwhile protecting a traitor to his own people? He'll turn against you, too."

"You wish to burn the crops."

"We begin to understand each other."

"Then take me to your chief as a prisoner," Furukawa proposed. "You can threaten the *presidente* of Libungan, telling him unless he burns the crops, you will send me to Cotabato to report the plotting I heard tonight." Then, hearing Doña Pilar's wordless exclamation, the Jap gained confidence. "You are a guerrilla, threatening these patriotic farmers until they listen to treason and sabotage. They are not with you willingly. They are simple people, they are afraid of their own liberators, they are stupid and ignorant, so the fear of what I might report will make them do as you order."

Courage, and wit, and cunning! Even in the face of what he knew to be fatality, Furukawa would neither quit, nor knuckle down before the vengeful widow's demand for Moro torture. There was no doubt but what Furukawa alive was valuable as a club over Don Ramón. Kane was tempted, and he would have made a bargain but for remembering what Datu Ryan had said. "Don't ever forget Napoleon's maxims, Jim. They're as good for civilians as for soldiers. This is the best of them all: *Never meet the enemy on ground of his own choosing, if only because that ground is his choice.*"

And now Kane saw the full force of it; the saying applied to more than battle or ambush. He said, "Furukawa, you are logical, but I am making the bargain, not you. Get on your feet, and meet what is waiting for you."

He gave the man a lift, took the bamboo switch and said to Doña Pilar, "Keep my knife, give me the bolo. If it seems that I'm not coming back, look out for yourself. And go with God!"

"*Vaya con Dios!*"

He marched his prisoner toward the waiting villagers, after first shouting to warn them. When he faced the group, he said, "Here is Kiyoshi Furukawa. Data Ryan tells me to deal with you, Don Ramón."

He played the flashlight over the Jap's head, into the faces of the villagers. None had left.

"This man," Kane continued, "told me that if I took him on into the mountains as a hostage, I could compel you to burn your fields, for if you failed to do so, I had only to release him to make his report about your plotting and the things that some of you said against Greater East Asia."

The Jap made a start at speech, but Kane twisted the staff and the biting rattan cut him short.

"But look, Don Ramón, Don Gregorio." He called each of the others by name. "We are comrades. If there is not trust between us, then there is nothing. This man offered me a threat, when I knew from the first—"

"Then he didn't escape! Then this is a trick!"

"Yes, but an honest one. You see, I could have done the very thing he told me to do to save his neck. But you hotheads would have killed him, back there. That would have been bad."

IT WAS ticklish business. Six to one, and at least two had knives; yet Kane was betting on their worry, their perplexity, the shock of seeing Furukawa a prisoner when they were certain that he had taken the handiest *banca* to hurry downstream to Cotabato. Kane was in the saddle, and he plied the spurs.

"Here it is, Don Ramón. You'll burn your fields because you are Filipinos, not because someone holds a threat over you. Or, you will harvest the crop because these *chingados* threaten you, then take the food that you have raised and leave you to eat roots and ferns."

Those bewildered and beaten farmers became men at the sound of what he said. All at once, they spoke, each drowning out the other's speech, but the sum of it was approval. Then the *presidente* said, "That is true, Yussuf."

"He would have put you before a firing squad. One man killing six and ruining a

barrio. Or, six men protecting each other. You, the one who pulled a knife on me, draw it again!"

The man obeyed.

Kane gave the switch a turn, so that the Jap's breathing became a labored wheeze. His knees buckled and he crumpled, though he still struggled. Kane asked, "Who strikes first? We are together in this."

The moon had been rising over the Apo Range, far off to the east. In the first trace of brightness, he could see the villagers eye and nudge each other. The knife twinkled.

"This is hardly fitting," the *presidente* objected. "Killing a man as one does a chicken."

"Turn him loose then. Who says turn him loose?"

There was no answer.

Don Ramón took the knife. "My house betrayed these men, this is my work."

"Wait! No blood on your clothes. Step well back, take them off."

They obeyed. Then, when they came back, brown shapes in the dimness, Don Ramón said, "Each in turn. It must be on all of us."

One by one, they thrust. Finally Kane took the blade and struck deep.

He listened to the booming of crocodiles. It was as if they had smelled the blood. Reeds rustled and there was a threshing.

"Swing well, and heave."

He counted, and at the third swing, they let go. There was a splash. Then came a fierce threshing, a bellowing, the crunch of jaws and the wrathful snapping teeth of those who had missed the offering.

In a safe and shallow pool, the men of Libungan washed. While they dressed, Kane said, "Now go home. After what you have done, you cannot be afraid to burn your crop the night before harvesting is to start. And there will be others. You have pledged it in blood of an enemy."

They said nothing. Their silence betokened their awe. This was stronger than any oath sealed with the blood of a fowl.

When they were about to go, Kane gave them the final word. "I questioned Furukawa and he lied to me, but it is clear that he was not under orders to spy on you. It is clear that he got unexpected word that there would be something to hear at the *presidente's* house. You remember how, last night, he swung in toward the bank, and then changed his mind?"

"That is true."

"Someone signaled, someone called—someone who had an old understanding, so that no time was needed. Someone, Don Ramón, wondered why you took interest in a tall Moro stranger, and someone managed to find out and go upstream to tell Furukawa to quit lecturing and start listening.

"So find your traitor, and see that he does no more talking before the fields are set afire. And let Furukawa's launch remain where it is."

He turned his back to them and started north. There was no speech behind him.

Then there was a stirring in the grass, and Doña Pilar came from cover. "You fool, why did you tell them there was a traitor in the village? Now they're scared silly, they may run away!"

"To deal fairly with them. Otherwise, they would have thought themselves in the clear, since on the face of things, any one of half a dozen *barrios* might be responsible for Furukawa's disappearance. Anyway, they may spot the traitor."

"And now they won't burn the fields!"

"I think they will. But there'd have been no chance at all if I'd let them believe that someone in Cotabato had sent Furukawa to spy. As it is—"

The old lady laughed softly. "You're right, both ways are bad!"

"'When both roads are muddy,'" Kane quoted in Tagalog, "'take the shortest.'"

They continued northward toward Highway One, since the spy's disappearance would lead to a combing of the country and the *barrios* adjoining Libungan Town; and then there was the matter of sending Ryan a report, as well as finding out how the others were faring with the farmers.

CHAPTER V

TUGAB'S PLAN

KANE and Doña Pilar fared better in the *barrios* north of the highway, just short of the foothills. Whether his first attempt had seasoned him to the task, or whether the nearness of the Buldun Mountains made the *taos* more daring, Kane did not know; and as far as the several *presidentes* were concerned, they profited by Don Ramón's experience and met where no spy could lurk.

The fields were dry now, and the stalks were golden, with a full metallic glint. The harvest was only a few days distant.

"It is spreading," Doña Pilar said, as she squatted beside the rice pot. "There are whispers of it among the women, even before you talk to the *presidente*. And Ximenes, 'way back at Silik, he is at work. You did not have to tell me what Datu Ryan said. There is already enough for me to guess."

"How in God's name—" he began, and then stopped, for her eyes mocked his question.

"Yes?"

"Such a deadly business, and yet the women of strange harvest hands know of it, that's what I meant."

She sighed, and shook her head. "*Muy valiente*, yet you are stupid as a boy, in some ways! Simply because it *is* dangerous, people must

talk to someone. When the elders talk, those to whom they have spoken—"

"Their wives," he cut in, wrathfully. "Passing it along!"

"They are oppressed, and they want company in their worry."

"God damn them!" He made it a solemn curse, not flippant blasphemy. "A man trusts them, and—what's the use! When there aren't spies, the loose mouths give themselves away!"

"If knowledge is so heavy that it weakens a man, why wouldn't it do as much for his woman?"

"*You* wouldn't have squawked! You wouldn't have pulled Furukawa down on our necks with loose chatter." He gestured toward the distant swamp. "You—"

"You engineers! Humanity must work like an equation. The traverse must close, one in seven hundred and fifty." Seeing his astonishment, she reminded him, "My husband, may the saints bless him, he was an engineer before he was governor. I know how such men think. But in the end, he used his heart, not his head. Just as you worry about rice rioters being shot when the success of this terrible thing brings on the hard pinch, and the hotheads forget to be mathematical."

"Shut up, will you! I don't want to think of it! Leave that to Ryan. As long as I can, I want to concentrate on the Bishop and the cutch-pickers."

And thinking of Bishop Jackson's prodigious laughter, Kane almost laughed.

Just before Kane's return to carry on with Doña Pilar, Hong Li's jerry-built radio began to broadcast, on Tokyo wavelength, stories of further Japanese disasters, and of the doom that was coming out of the east. People were talking of it in Tibuan when he came down, so he said, "Smuggle into the hills all the rice you can. MacArthur will be back before you starve."

Political police came into Tibuan to seize radios, but not before Hong Li, perfectly aping Japanese broadcasts, spoke of food shortage in Zambo. This gave strength to Kane's underground campaign. The farmers didn't understand waves and beams; whatever came over the air was to them Japanese, and while there was much they doubted, they did believe Hong Li's reports, since those were an admission against the enemy's interest.

The cunning Chinese even worded it—and here the subtle touch of Haji Maulana got in its poison—so that the natives would think that behind the reluctant frankness, the not-too-subtle glossing over of bad things, conditions were far worse than represented. All this gave the farmers a feeling of importance that they had never before had; it was the importance a soldier feels when he risks his one life to damage many enemies.

Kane spat on his finger and held it up, a crude bit of meteorology which had become a nervous habit. All things else being equal, wind came from the land by night and from the sea by day, but mountains, the big marshes, and disturbances in other areas often upset expectations.

"If fire travels toward the coast, then good," Doña Pilar said. "If it travels inland, then better. The wind belongs to God. Sticking up your finger can't change the event."

Planes droned northward.

"Looking for Hong Li. They're worried."

Later he fancied he heard the prolonged *crrrrrump* of explosions twenty-five miles away. He began to laugh. "Shut up, you fool!" Doña Pilar cautioned. "Or make it a Moro laugh."

"A flight of bombers, trying to pick off Hong Li, Hong Kua and Hong Tien! Three Chinese get a shellacking big enough for Cotabato!"

Thus far, there had been no arrests in Libungan Town, nor had Silang nor any of his colleagues fled. Kane was sure of this, since the grapevine had brought no rumor of such happenings. Doña Pilar, sniffing the air, got the smell of the rice fields—the peculiar scent of straw baked in the sun and then moistened by night mists.

"When?" he demanded.

"When it is ripe and ready. Not long now."

"Tomorrow I have to see Ramón Silang to find out if he has weakened, or if he has become strong. He's done one or the other. With what's hanging over him, he can't stay put."

THE local *presidente* had not heard of Furukawa's disappearance, which was odd. Where villagers whispered about earth-scorching, it seemed curious that they would hold their tongues from such sensational gossip. According to Doña Pilar's logic, the story of the seven knife-thrusts should have leaked out. And Furukawa's mission could hardly have been so extensive, as to time and territory, that he had not yet been missed by his superior in Cotabato.

Uncertainty finally made Kane venture back to Libungan. "I'll get in, and out, before bad trouble can develop. They certainly can't be sitting there waiting to nail me," he told Doña Pilar, by way of discounting her qualms. "And you stay here, do you understand?"

"You are a fool," she said. "Ryan should know, someone should know."

It was toward evening of the following day that Kane reached Libungan. There he joined a Moro family at the pot of vegetables, strengthened with very little fish and a dismaying quantity of those small red peppers. Unlike most spices, these did not stimulate the appetite; on the contrary, they paralyzed the entire gastric tract, making a little food do for a lot.

When he asked, making conversation, how they liked the *presidente*, he got more than he

expected. "Doubtless Allah will be merciful to the infidel."

"He has achieved the fullness?" Kane asked, with an inward sickening at the thought of Silang's death. "How did this happen?"

"*Wallah*, he isn't dead yet, though he will be. He's in jail at Cotabato."

"Why?"

"It is not known, but there will be a reaping, O Yussuf, first of rice, and then of men."

"What others are jailed?"

The man showed betel-blackened teeth in what he called a smile. "One Guevara, and a Valdez, and—"

Oddly, not one of Silang's fellow-conspirators was named, nor was there anyone looking for Yussuf. Had there been, this grim little hillman would have said so; of that Kane was sure.

He went to see Gregorio Tugab. Facing Silang's family was the last thing he wanted to do. On his way, he sized up the terrain to the south, just in case he had to leave quickly. The hills which had once seemed near were now very far away. Approaching darkness was his only protection.

But first to see Ah Wang. There were lights in the shop.

The Chinese didn't know him. He was all sold out, he said, and he began to put up the shutters of the open front, remotely courteous, and with an ambiguous smile, he did not want any Auld Lang Syne. This was more than enough to tell Kane that trouble was on the way.

Ah Wang's atittude meant, run fast and far, and don't look back. Kane would have been justified in doing so. A guerrilla is supposed to hit only when he has a good chance of escape; in that, and that only, does he differ from a soldier. To stay when he should run is as serious a breach of discipline as for a soldier to run when he had been told to hold at all cost.

But logic always failed Kane in the pinch. He went toward Gregorio Tugab's house, and found him in.

Kane squatted on the floor and listened. The metallic-voiced man had one chair, and he sat in it as though it were a throne.

"You came back sooner than I expected."

"After what happened, why did you expect me at all?"

"You would come back to see if we would keep our promise. And you did not find Señor Silang?"

"Of course not!"

"So you see me?"

"Who else?"

"You must know he is in jail."

"I want to know why. That knife work?"

"*Quien sabe?* With those others, he might be a hostage for the safety of the rice. Or, those others, being innocent, it will make their

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indignant families tell on those not so innocent. I mean, about six men with the one knife."

"Have they left? Silang's son and the others of that night?"

A fatalistic shrug. "That would be confession."

Since there was still hope for those not arrested, their love of family, of land, of neighbors would make them gamble to the extremity, for to be cut off from one's community and one's acres is little short of the maximum penalty. The *tao* can so much more clearly imagine exile than he can picture death, an abstraction and something inevitable; exile, being among strangers, is horror he can comprehend. All that, and the gambling urge. "After all, we can sneak away tomorrow," they would tell themselves. "There is still time. We'll have some warning."

The Japs had done well, for in arresting five innocent men and only one conspirator, they were putting pressure on people whose resentment against injustice would break their resolution far sooner than would be the case with men who had set themselves to a grim task.

"Confessions are expected . . . important revelations are pending . . ." Kane wondered if Japanese journalism had equivalent rubber-stamp terms.

Tugab's pockmarked face was tight from his intent scrutiny of his visitor. Finally he asked, "Would you help them get out?"

"Why me? I face the risks they do."

Tugab leaned close, and whispered hoarsely, "With a jail break, the whole village is implicated, so all must leave. And why not leave with fire behind them? There would be nothing more to lose, no more fear."

THE man was right, and Kane barely controlled his joy. Helping Silang escape would directly further the prime objective. It would be good, too, to show that guerrillas would go to some risk on behalf of right-minded civilians. But most of all, Kane was glad because duty did not forbid his going to bat for a good man.

"Shall we see the others, or can you and I do it ourselves?"

Tugab's eyes narrowed. "You have quick wit. It was shrewd, having Furukawa smuggled away to get us running out to the marsh. And then making it so not one dared tell his family. It was—or do you know how the Chino swears by spilling the blood of a chicken?"

"I've heard of it, and they believe in it. And two are better than six, in a business like this. When can we start? What have we to do?"

"I know a man in Cotabato who has a car. But he has to steal fuel."

Since Tugab made no mention of Furukawa's launch, Kane did not inquire whether it had been found; probably it had.

"But breaking the *juzgado?*"

Tugab made a reassuring gesture. "Smuggle in hacksaw blades. I can get some from a Chino. We have only to wait, and then drive."

Waiting, within limits, was just what Kane wanted, though he did not say so; instead, "You had a changing mind, that night. Don't let it change this time."

"Count on me. May God do to me what we did to Furukawa, and more, if I do not carry this through!"

Kane begged off when Tugab asked if he wanted to go with him to Cotabato. "With you wearing a hat and clothes bought in a store, it would look odd if I went with you."

"Go as a *cargador,*" was the sensible follow-up.

"No, by God! Not that I mind trailing you and carrying a pack. It is that I do not like towns. I will not wait in one while you go about arranging things."

Tugab was patient with mountaineer stubbornness. "But it is well to get acquainted, just in case something goes wrong. You'll know which way to run."

"Look, my friend." Kane wagged a finger under Tugab's broad nose. "I go to stand guard while you put saw blades through Don Ramón's window. If someone comes along at the wrong time, I'll feed him some knife. If there is a policeman too close, I'll attend to him. Once Don Ramón is out of jail, you drive. There will not be a soldier at the bridge to shoot at you."

"You know of the bridge then?"

Kane grunted. "I've seen the town from a distance," he said, which was putting it mildly. During his erstwhile impersonation of a missionary, he had spied the town from end to end —though but for Doña Pilar, he would never have escaped.

"But if there are two sentries?"

"God gives victory. But with all respect, depending on a borrowed car is foolish. You have to trust the driver."

"He is my *compadre.*"

"Aywah! He is like a brother, but he goes to steal gasoline. He is caught. He will either be shot, or he will say why he wants to travel. A man has only one life. So he baits the trap. They watch him, he is glad to see you, and they are glad to see us."

"What do you say, Yussuf?"

"A boat is best. Then, well out in the bay, we'll have a big *prahu* waiting. What chance have we on roads? Before we can drive to the big road, soldiers will come from Parang to block us. They have ten kilometers to go. We have to go thirteen from the Cotabato bridge to the big road."

"But they won't miss Don Ramón. Long before they find he's gone and radio the garrison at Parang, we'll be driving inland."

"If there is no noise in Cotabato. Are you God, to promise that?"

"Start a fire on the waterfront. That will amuse the police and constabulary, and no one will think of the *juzgado.*"

Kane applauded that twist of Tugab's strategy. "You should join Datu Ryan. That is just what he would do. You are a smart man, my friend. The good will of a friendly fool is more dangerous than the envy of the envier."

"It is nothing," Tugab disclaimed, modestly. "But tell me, Yussuf, why must we do this alone?"

"The thought was yours."

"No, I mean couldn't Datu Ryan send some good men to town—his best men? As fishermen, *cargadores,* harvesters buying supplies? And their guns could be hidden in a carabao cart, under a load of firewood. Or under the nets of a fishing boat."

"To drive the constabulary to cover, break up the radio, give us a chance to get Don Ramón away?"

"Manifestly, that would be better."

"Risk twenty men, fifty men, to save one? It is clear that you do not know Datu Ryan. There is no heart in him, he has no pity for any man, least of all himself."

"But if you were in the *juzgado?*"

"He would say that fate had willed it. He risks men only when he gives a greater hurt than he takes."

"Like a *juramentado?*"

"Even more so, for a *juramentado* counts nothing, while Datu Ryan counts all things. I'll be in the marketplace in Cotabato day after tomorrow. Shortly after dark. Does that give you enough time?"

"More than enough."

"I go now to tell my mother to hurry home."

"Where is she?"

Kane gestured broadly to the north. "Peaceful tarrying!" he said over his shoulder as he left, and Tugab wished him, "Peaceful journeying!"

KANE actually did go to tell Doña Pilar to get out and take cover; and he gave her a message for Hong Li, so that the radioman would be listening for police calls from Cotabato. If an alarm was sent to the Jap garrison at Parang, Hong Li was to fake a follow-up, representing that the fugitives had taken to the bay instead of to the highway, and were heading by sea toward the mouth of the Mataling River, some twenty miles up the coast from Parang.

For fugitives to feint for the dangerous highway, and then take to the bay in a swift-running *prahu* whose striped sail and dark hull would be impossible to spot at night, was entirely plausible; and the mouth of the Mataling River was a logical destination, as the source of that stream was on the northern side of the Buldun range, Ryan's hideout.

Such a broadcast, right after the Japs at Parang had acknowledged the Cotabato police message, would make the jailbreak seem like the work of a guerrilla band; and what could be more tempting to the Japs than the chance to recall their pursuit party and send it up the highway's coastal branch to intercept the fugitives. Meanwhile, the inland stretch of the highway through Parang would be clear.

All this was a gamble. There might not be any alarm; and if there were, Kane had his own ideas on getting Don Ramón to safety, regardless of Tugab's magnificent confidence in friend and car.

"Once the jail is cracked," Kane told himself, as he paddled his *prahu* toward Cotabato shortly after dusk of the appointed evening, "I'm bossing this show. Tugab's too damn smart."

Tugab was plainly a glory-hunter. Saving the *presidente,* as Kane saw it, was being arranged in such a way as to boost Gregorio Tugab's stock. Probably the man had seen too many movies involving high-speed pursuits. His Malay taste for fast rides undoubtedly loomed up in this craving for the most spectacular, rather than the safest, escape. He seemed to ignore the fact that the driver of a Jap scouting car could poke his throttle foot all the way into the crankcase.

Teaming up with Tugab, a flighty person he definitely disliked, was a risky business, but being keenly aware of the risks had given Kane a chance to offset them. Finally, he had in some respects misled Tugab, who was undeniably reckless in making assumptions about his friend who had a car.

Covered by darkness, Kane approached and passed under the bridge. Though there was no traffic, the mumble of the surf, nearly three miles away, kept him from hearing whether a sentry was posted overhead, and there was the thump and wallow of fishing boats moored along the river front. Further downstream were jetties where coastwise boats took on freight.

Kane found a spot where he could conceal his *prahu,* securing it against going adrift without having to beach it. That done, he carefully sized up his surroundings. Looking north, there were no landmarks, for the provincial capital was sprawled on low-lying flats laced by reeking tidal inlets. Constabulary Hill, so called because of the *comandancia* on its crest, was little more than a pimple, and scarcely high enough to bring the headquarters building above the swamp and river mists.

Since the lights of the *comandancia* had no partners, he concluded that the governor's house, which had been set afire that night when Doña Pilar helped him escape from the Japanese soldiers sent to arrest him, had not been rebuilt.

As for the rest of Cotabato, it was a tangle of narrow streets fronted by bamboo shacks, tin-

roofed frame houses, Chinese shops. Although a few buildings were of masonry, and a few of substantial native wooden design, the capital was as ragged as could be imagined. The church, of course, included more masonry than all the rest of the town put together; that and the jail were two structures on which Spain never skimped. Nor had the American administration improved Cotabato, since nearby Parang was a far more healthful locale and had better shipping facilities.

All day long the sun had beaten the corrugated iron roofs of the barnlike warehouses along the river, so that the hot air which they now exhaled was heavy with the odor of copra. The stuff would make a brisk blaze, since it fairly dripped with coconut oil—oil for soap and for the glycerin which the Japs needed for explosives.

Kane picked landmarks as he came up through the reeking shadows of warehouses, some empty, some dilapidated, some exhaling the scent of their varied contents. And over all was the bouquet of dried fish.

In the marketplace there were booths of bamboo and thatch, as well as spaces whose only shelter was canopies of *suali* matting, or ragged sail-cloth. The patchwork of cobblestones and flagstones, on which the wares were spread during business hours, was littered with rotten vegetables and fruit, fish trimmings, scraps of fowl which the scavenging dogs had found not worth the worrying. Where by day the entire space was jammed with shoppers and the market women who squatted behind merchandise displayed on straw mats, it was now only a darkness and a blend of smells, with neither motion nor color to redeem it.

Dim lights, peeping furtively from Chinese shops across the street, silhouetted the uprights of bamboo and of palm stakes, but did little to relieve the gloom. Cotabato was alive, but apprehensive, wary.

KANE, making the most of the obscurity of the back street, passed a warehouse and won the concealment of a building he remembered from his former visit. It had not been rebuilt. He crept into the fire-gutted ruin, and crouched at the windowsill. The field of view was good. After making a circuit of the ruin and finding an exit, he returned to his observation post, where he settled down to watch.

South and west of Cotabato were *barrios* so near the capital as to be suburbs. These outlying villages cluttered the banks of the tidal inlets and the streams which made a network just short of the sea. Here was another avenue of escape.

Kane saw few pedestrians. An occasional *caromata* or *calesa* rattled by. Once, probably in the street beyond the one which skirted the market, he heard the axle creaking and the rumble of a carabao cart. There was no motor traffic, and what voices he did hear seemed furtive rather than merely indistinct. Dread hung over the town. He felt the sullenness, wariness, tension, all unrelieved by any of the Malay spirit and gaiety of the old times, when there would have been music and laughter, quarreling, the riot and shrieking of the crowd at a cock fight.

Finally a man in white strode briskly into view from Kane's right, and skirted the first quarter of the marketfront before slackening his pace. He turned as if looking back at the portion he had just passed, then resumed his way, now dawdling along. When at last he was on the point of passing beyond Kane's field of vision, the man halted and stepped into the cluttered square. He poked about in several booths. Kane, though sure that this must be Tugab, was taking no chances on premature revelation.

He watched him prowl his way toward the center of the square. "Yussuf," the man said guardedly, little above a whisper. "Where are you?"

The approach had not been casual enough. Tugab had overlooked several plausible pretexts for stepping from the street and into the darkness. Kane was standing pat until he could be sure that no one had followed Tugab.

Presently the farmer struck a match and squatted as though looking for something presumably lost during business hours, which would have been convincing enough if he'd done so right away. The flare clearly revealed his face. Tugab, all right.

"Yussuf? *Ay, chinga'o!* Come out, no one followed me."

The flame went out. The blur of white straightened up. Tugab cursed, spat and turned to go, but ended by waiting for perhaps a quarter of an hour, first leaning against a canopy column, then moving to prop his elbow on a booth counter.

When it was clear that he was giving it up as a bad job, Kane crept from hiding, in time to catch a glimpse of a white coat-tail. Tugab was retracing his steps. Kane bounded along the darkness of the parallel street. He stretched his legs in long, silent strides.

At the mouth of the first alley he paused. In less than thirty seconds, a man in white cut across the farther end. Barring coincidence, that was Tugab.

Kane resumed the soundless race, increasing his speed to the limit. He swung up the next alley, going half its length before slowing down. Then, controlling his breathing, he skirted the wall and came within a few yards of the main street before Tugab stepped past.

The man's pace was brisk. Kane had barely worked himself to the mouth of the alley when Tugab turned into a doorway—as a good guess, the third one from the corner. Voices mum-

When Tugab's pacing brought him within reach, Kane whipped his turban over the man's head from behind.

bled. Question and answer. Abruptly, the sounds became clearer. "Go back and wait, you stupid *cabrón!* Is it that we have all night? Why didn't you say you didn't know just when he'd get here?"

"*Caballeros,*" Tugab declared, metallically, as he backed into view, "who but a *cabrón* would be impatient with twenty thousand—"

Another cut in, "Please ignore it, my friend, but the day is so full of *pendejadas!* Now, we go, but listen—"

Kane could not hear what followed.

Across the street, the lighting of a lamp behind jalousies threw yellow bars on the three men. Two were in khaki uniform—whether police or constabulary, Kane could not see. Tugab hurried back to the market.

Kane was waiting for him in the shadow of a booth. And when Tugab's pacing brought him within reach, Kane looped his turban cloth and whipped it over the man's head, under his chin. From behind, he locked it tight, in the manner but without the deadly violence of an East Indian strangler.

It was ticklish, cutting off breath and outcry and yet not breaking the man's neck as he hustled him toward the fire-gutted ruin, but Kane managed it. Once under cover, he spoke into Tugab's ear. "Whoever gets twenty thousand pesos for my head, it won't be you, you dirty rat!"

Tugab made a gargling, wheezing sound and went limp. Doubtless he remembered what had happened to Kiyoshi Furukawa. As for Kane, while he was not wholly surprised, he was far from happy at knowing that he had teamed up with a Judas.

CHAPTER VI

THE BETRAYER BETRAYED

WHEN Tugab came out of it, Kane had trussed him up with rattan drawn from a market canopy and there was a keen dagger at his throat. "Before I give you what Furukawa got, I'll hear what you have to say. But let me tell you something. I picked you because I suspected you from the first. So I lied to you when I said Datu Ryan would not take a hand in this. He'll be here tonight."

The strict truth was that Ryan *might* send some men, if he had got the message in time and if the situation did not make a raid too dangerous to be justifiable. Through the blade of the dagger, Kane could feel the twitch of Tugab's throat, and he knew that his words had been shocking.

"Ryan will be here. Whether he gets the *presidente* out of jail or not, he'll take you along, you *chingado!* You guess the rest, eh?"

The man was unable to answer, nor did his paralysis in the least indicate cowardice. He

knew what the more primitive hillmen of the guerrilla band would do if Ryan looked the other way and gave them a free hand; and the women were even more malignant in dealing with renegades.

Kane went on, "You told the police I was coming alone, twenty thousand pesos walking into their hands, and naturally, your two friends didn't tell the *jefe*, nor the captain at the *comandancia*. They wanted to hog the whole reward, no? Answer me, you—"

Tugab gulped. "I could not help it. It was forced on me!"

"That is not impossible," Kane admitted, sincerely enough. "Better men than you have been forced into evil. These are evil times, Gregorio. Even the old governor gave ground until he could stand it no longer."

Thus reassured by Kane's shift from Moro ferocity to a not entirely unsympathetic sternness, Tugab took heart. "It was as you say. I did this to save Don Ramón. Surely those innocent men in jail with him would force him to confess—"

"That's an old story!"

"And then he would be desperate and tell about me and the others who stabbed Furukawa. And you made us do it!"

"So you sold me out, to get Don Ramón released, no?"

"That is it. And no matter what you said about the killing of Furukawa, who would believe it, against us? I could not help it, you see—not just for myself, but for my friends, my *parientes*. My *compadres*. The entire *barrio*."

If this had been all of it, Kane could have forgiven the poor devil. But one thing stuck in his craw. He said, "So far, my heart is all with you. Only, you signaled Furukawa, and not for the sake of your friends. I talked to Furukawa before I brought him to be stabbed. I did not trust you tonight, yet I gave you the chance of proving Furukawa a liar. You proved he told the truth."

"In God's name, what will you do now?"

Tugab had relaxed. Fatalistic, resigned to the inevitable, he was too numbed to struggle with any will; but a dull remnant of instinct kept him from losing all hope, for despite the full exposure of his guilt, he still lived. Yet had he known it, it was not until this moment that Kane had been absolutely convinced of Tugab's guilt. The man who had betrayed others had finally been betrayed by himself, and not by Furukawa.

"What I do," Kane answered, "depends on many things. The hour of Datu Ryan's arrival is not certain. But when he does arrive, the town will not forget it. Still, most of the police will take cover, and your two friends will remember that you told them I would be here alone. They'll think that was a clever story to give you the free run of the town, so that you could signal the guerrillas when the time was right. You will not have many friends in Cotabato, and the Jap agents won't like you either. You won't be welcome at home again, if Don Ramón finds out about you. There is only one hope for you."

"That is true. But what—what—"

"Do you have a friend with a car?"

Tugab hesitated. "No. That was—"

"Let it pass. At least you do not try to run me into another trap. . . . Where were the police going? Walking their beats?"

"They went back to a *jueteng* game. Just around the corner." Tugab described the place. "Leaving it for no purpose made them sore."

"Hmm! Betting the twenty thousand pesos."

While Ryan might have got word and might make a raid, the compounded uncertainty prodded Kane to gamble as he would not otherwise have considered, for to liberate Ramón Silang involved far more than the lives of a few farmers. Success would strengthen others who wavered, and as Kane pictured the small, solid jail, he began to see a chance.

"Gregorio, you can help me."

"You trust me? By God, I'll show you! I have been foolish, I have been a *cabrón*, but now—"

"I won't have to trust you. You won't get out of reach, and no matter what happens, I'll slice you apart before I do anything else. Now I'll tell you what to do—"

FROM a market booth, Kane got a short, stout piece of bamboo the length of a cane, and a bit of rattan, and returned to his prisoner. He kept one end of the wiry strand looped about the man's wrist, letting him never get beyond knife reach. Slowly, they worked their way through the darkness, among the shacks of the outskirts, until finally they swung toward the jail.

The light of oil lamps came from its entrance. It was a small fortress of masonry, fronting on a cramped square paved with flagstone. Darkened buildings, mostly of a single story, hemmed in the square. The light from the station made a dull patch on the opposite shopfront. The rest of the open space was murky shadow.

Kane and his treacherous ally halted in a dark doorway. The smell of dobe tobacco came from the station. A newspaper crackled. A chair scraped. Someone spoke a few words. There was a muttered answer. Though it was late, there was no coolness to relieve the sweltering heat. Not a breath stirred the humid air. Uncounted insects buzzed and whirred and beat against the lighted spots. The interior of police headquarters, Kane told himself, was a cross between a Dutch oven and a Turkish bath. The cell in which the prisoners were packed must be even worse, for the heavily barred windows were narrow, and set high in the thick wall, making dark slits against the

somber masonry. There were no lamps in the corridor; kerosene had to be saved.

Two men on duty. There might be a third in an inner office, though in skirting the *juzgado*, Kane had not noted any lights.

"We'll risk it," he said. "Keep your head, pretend to be unconscious, go limp. I'll tend to them. Then follow me, and do as I say."

THEY moved from cover. *Jueteng* games and other undercover amusements kept patrolmen from their beats. Discipline had relaxed. A final look, a final cocking of the ear, and Kane clipped the rattan which secured the prisoner's wrist to his own. "Yell, and make it good!"

Tugab screeched for help. Kane cursed fiercely. Just to make certain that everything went according to plan, he reversed his dagger and smacked Tugab with the pommel, laying him out cold.

Someone in the station yelled, *"Qué pasa?"*

Kane, crouching beside the traitor, made two quick, light gashes, one on the forehead, one across the chest, letting a lot of blood with very little damage. When he rolled over, his own hands and face were gory. The dagger lay near the two, who seemed victims of a Kilkenny fight. Kane, groaning and mumbling, slouched over his bamboo cudgel. He made enough noise for two groggy and helpless combatants, imitating the gurgling wheeze of slashed throat and punctured lungs for added realism.

That the two cops came out, first grumbling, then exclaiming from interest at finding more than a triviality, was no surprise.

As between a man wearing turban and sarong, and one wearing shoes and store clothes, there was not an instant's hesitation. Despite the fight's having been some yards short of the light which reached from the station, it was clear that one of the brawlers was a *tao*, and that the other was *gente*. No cop is so dumb as to ignore such social distinctions.

Tugab, wits still scattered from a pass with a good substitute for brass knuckles, mumbled and breathed hoarsely. They stooped to pick him up. "He must have killed that other *cabrón*," one said; and the other, *"Chinga'o*, how these head cuts bleed!"

And just then Kane snapped silently to his feet. He landed a blow on one averted head, dropping a cop to his knees. The other, wondering at his companion's clumsiness and the sharp popping sound, had no time to react; the return swing knocked him flat and senseless. Kane grabbed a belt and pistol from one. The other had only a truncheon.

Whoever else might have heard the rumpus of the fake fight had evidently shrugged it off, considering it a passing and uninteresting event. So, better armed than he had been for some time, Kane hustled the top man of the heap into the front office and dumped him into a chair.

He raced back, getting the other. The man weighed not over a hundred and twenty, so he picked him up bodily and darted back to cover. They would not be out long. Seeing that he still had time, he also got Tugab. That done, he rattled the iron grille which guarded the corridor.

"Wake up! Wake up!"

"Coming, *señor!*"

It was the turnkey, who had slept through it all. He stumbled from the darkness of the back office, and blinked stupidly into the light. For an instant he could not believe what he saw: a blood-smeared man standing at the desk, blocking his way.

"What's the matter? What—"

Kane leveled his pistol. "Open up! And don't fumble your keys."

It was only then that the old man saw the three who were sprawled before the desk—one in a chair, two on the floor. That convinced him that whatever the game was, he'd better play by Kane's rules. His hand shook, the keys jangled, but he managed.

"Now drag these fellows in, and quick!"

"But—I tell you—what will they do—"

"What *I'll* do hurts you first. Quick, now!"

Grunting and wheezing, the old fellow obeyed. When the third of the mumbling trio was behind the grille, Kane followed, carrying the lamp he had picked from its bracket.

"Don Ramón! Where is he? Hurry, old man!"

"In the name of God, who calls me?"

"Yussuf! Wake up your friends, we go."

"But how, where—"

"Get going!"

The five prisoners tottered out, blinking, dazed, and calling on the saints. For a moment, they thought that they were being hustled out for another third degree, or perhaps to face a firing squad. But Ramón Silang's joy reassured them, and at Kane's command, they jailed the jailors.

"What's this?" Ramón exclaimed. "Gregorio—"

"Tugab sold you to the Japs. He nearly tricked me. Leave him here. Hurry!"

Kane had barely slammed and locked the grille when the cops recovered enough to shout and rattle the cell door, but that only hastened the dash across the square.

"I've got a *prahu*," Kane told the released prisoners as they plunged into a dark street that ran toward the river. "Whatever happens, you go home. Tell your people to get out, take to the hills. Mount Blik—or Talayan—don't risk going north—"

"But you?"

"I have business here—business that may give you time to paddle upstream. And you'll burn your fields—it is agreed?"

"After all this, yes! What fools we were to hesitate! Count on us!"

They were now at the water's edge. The *prahu* was just as he had left it. "With two paddles, you can make fair time," Kane said.

But Silang interrupted, "One man can't cover us. That's insane! Come with us."

"I have work to do. The traitor of Libungan is now in the *juzgado*. Shove off, and good luck."

Then one of Ramón Silang's companions exclaimed, "*Sus-mari' Josep!* Look, fire! No, not rice fields—the warehouses over there."

There was flame, and now shouting. A bell clanged, a siren screamed. Then came the familiar yell of the mountain men, and the thin whack of the .256 Arisaka. The sound grew, the town was awakening; and above all the tumult, one voice rang through. The Black Bishop was on the job. Hell roared, spurts of gunfire came from Constabulary Hill, but answering blasts kept the men in the *comandancia* bottled up.

"Let us go with Datu Ryan," Ramón Silang proposed. "Are we *cabrones*, to run when he is— That is why you stayed, no?"

"Play it your way," Kane agreed, and turned back from the river.

CHAPTER VII

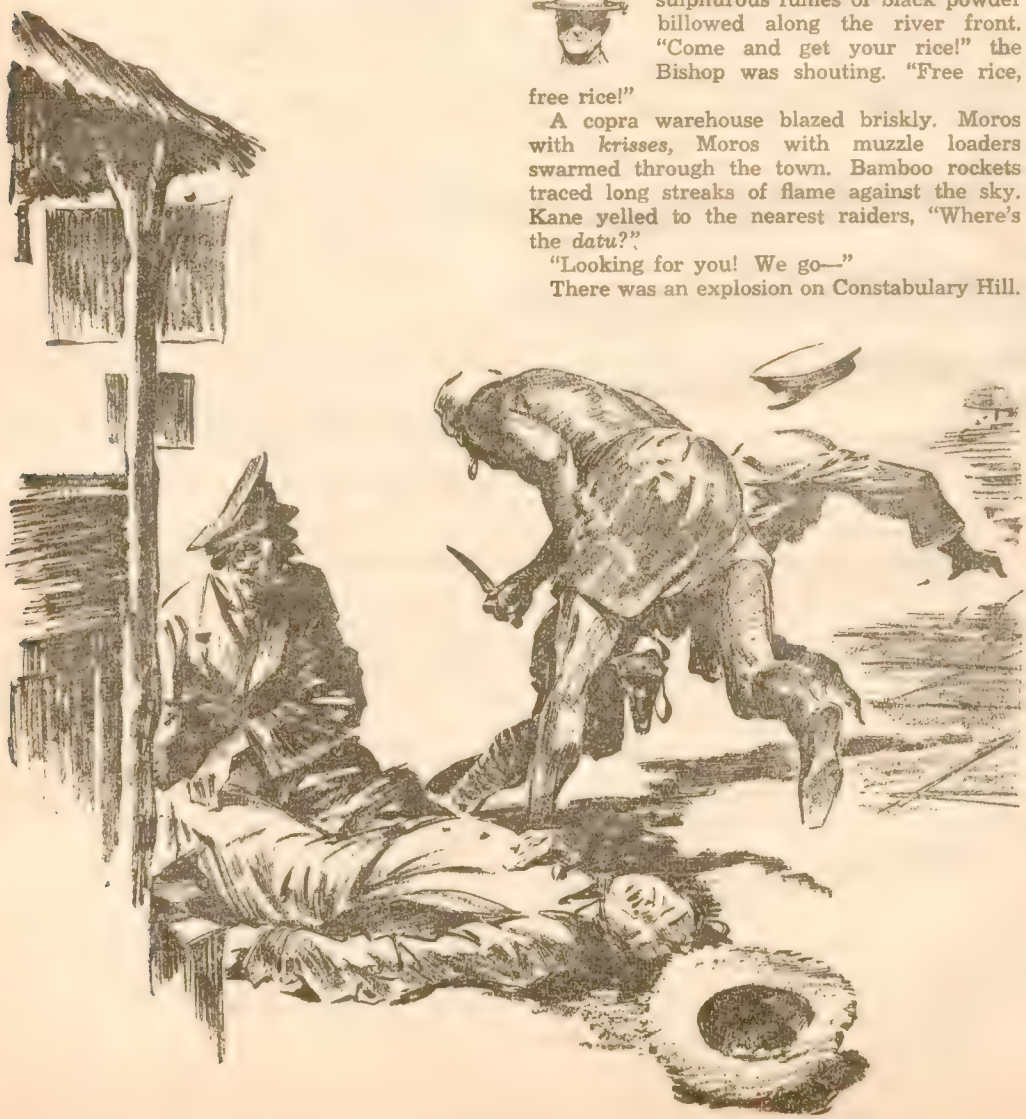
THE STRANGE PLATOON

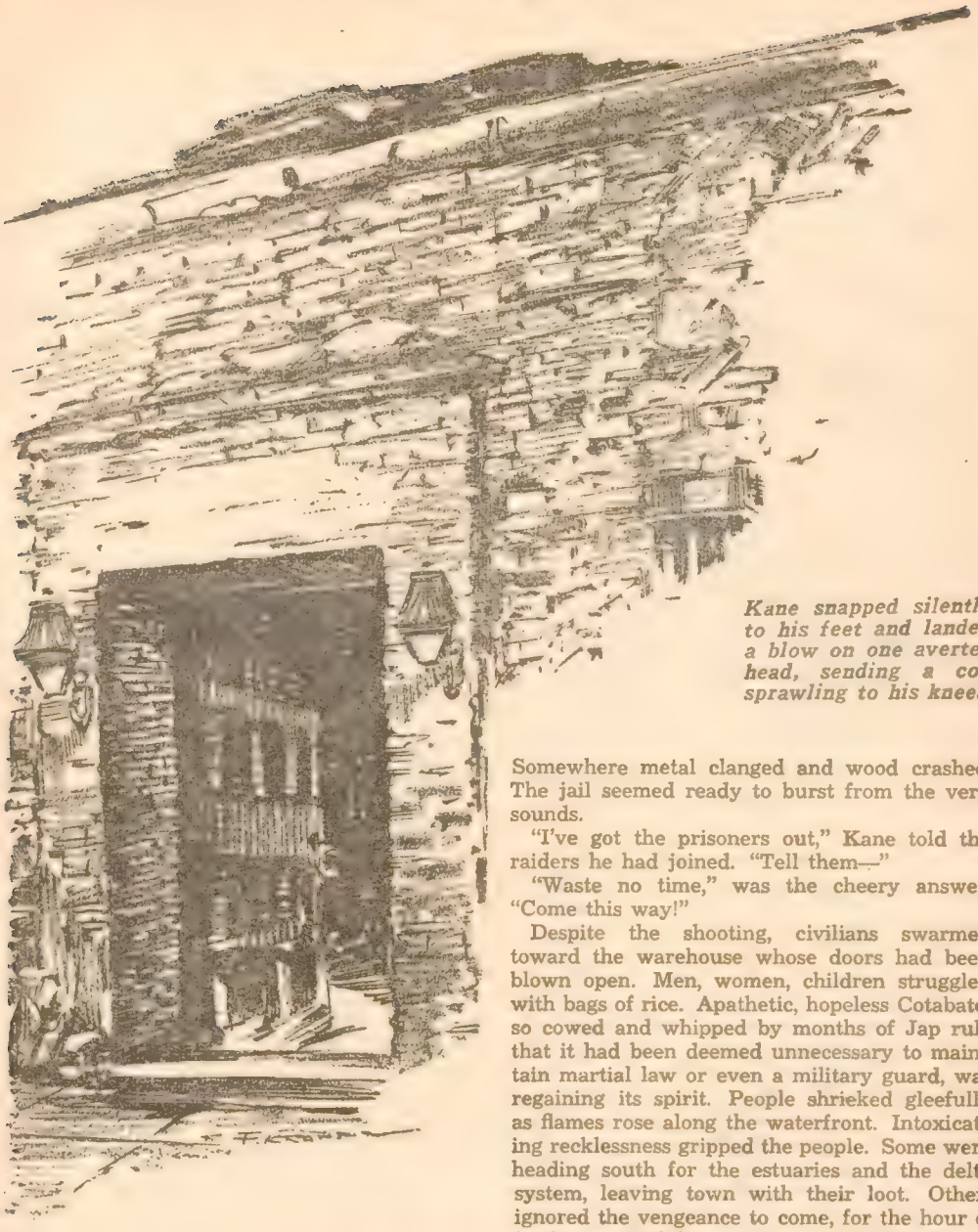
A BLAST shook the town. The sulphurous fumes of black powder billowed along the river front. "Come and get your rice!" the Bishop was shouting. "Free rice, free rice!"

A copra warehouse blazed briskly. Moros with *krisses*, Moros with muzzle loaders swarmed through the town. Bamboo rockets traced long streaks of flame against the sky. Kane yelled to the nearest raiders, "Where's the *datu*?"

"Looking for you! We go—"

There was an explosion on Constabulary Hill.





Kane snapped silently to his feet and landed a blow on one averted head, sending a cop sprawling to his knees.

The Moros yelled, gestured. "That way, the fire truck!"

Homemade blackpowder grenades, lighted from cigarette butts, were bursting in the enclosure in which a constabulary detachment had been bottled up. Bombs rumbling at the foot of the wall kicked up earth and spewed choking smoke, making it impossible for the desperate handful to make effective use of their smokeless powder rifles. The police force and the *jueteng* games also stayed under cover.

Somewhere metal clanged and wood crashed. The jail seemed ready to burst from the very sounds.

"I've got the prisoners out," Kane told the raiders he had joined. "Tell them—"

"Waste no time," was the cheery answer. "Come this way!"

Despite the shooting, civilians swarmed toward the warehouse whose doors had been blown open. Men, women, children struggled with bags of rice. Apathetic, hopeless Cotabato, so cowed and whipped by months of Jap rule that it had been deemed unnecessary to maintain martial law or even a military guard, was regaining its spirit. People shrieked gleefully as flames rose along the waterfront. Intoxicating recklessness gripped the people. Some were heading south for the estuaries and the delta system, leaving town with their loot. Others ignored the vengeance to come, for the hour of lawlessness exhilarated them, and the devil take tomorrow!

Mobs battered down the doors of Japanese houses and shops. The Moros got no chance at the occupants. Reprisals tomorrow, but have at it tonight!

Kane came to the fire-department truck. The crew was missing. The Bishop, whirling with one hand a *kampilan* designed for two-handed use, raised his voice. "Praise the Lawd, Jim, I been praying for you, and behold, you done come out of the valley of the shadow of death!"

The chief addressed Ryan in dialect and neither could understand the other, but each knew compliments were intended.

Ryan, in full uniform, toyed with his saber knot and grinned sourly. "If you're not a God-damn fool, I never want to see one! So you did get your buddies out of jail?"

A crowd of Moros hustled Gregorio Tugab along. "*Aywah,* we saved him, we have the *presidente!*"

Kane spat. "Well, all right, but you wasted a lot of work! That's the renegade who started the whole trouble."

"Tell me about it later. Bring him along," Ryan ordered. "And get going! Time's up! Don Ramón, the rest of you, ride the truck."

The siren screeched. Ryan shouted a command. The Moro raiders raced for the waterfront. "For the boats," the *datu* explained, "all except these that are riding. All right, Jim, let's hear about it."

They had jettisoned enough fire equipment to make room for the rescued prisoners and for Ryan's picked handful. Three had automatic rifles. The others had Arisakas. Kane noted this, and then he was busy hanging on. The man at the wheel whooped, poured on the coal and wound up the siren.

Once before, Kane had raced over this same road, but the madman now at the wheel set a record for Malay driving. When the big black bulk of a carabao loomed up, Kane wished that he had walked, but aside from a fender-thump and a savage swerve, the driver made it clear.

"Cut out that siren!" Ryan yelled, and shook the man's shoulder. Then, in the comparative silence, "All right, Jim—"

But Kane was asking, not telling. "They'll sure as hell beat us to the crossroads—I mean the Skibbies from Parang."

"Don't worry, we're making good time."

"Even if the constabulary didn't get an alarm on the air, those rockets and that blaze—"

Ryan laughed. "We'll make it. Now how'd you get the *presidente* out single-handed? And how does that renegade Tugab—"

It was then that Kane saw the fires to the east of the highway. The darkness of the valley was dotted with ruddy spots. Wind swept the flame inland. The spots stretched, becoming long red lines. Sparks geysered up in tall columns. The far-off *pop-pop-pop* was the explosion of bamboo joints in the heat of blazing rice fields.

"Like someone had touched them off with a signal!"

Ryan answered, "Someone did, and the rockets were the signal. The Bishop's pagans said the wind would be right, and they'd touch off the fields near the valley mouth to set an example to the farmers, make the *taos* think their neighbors had started a bit of earth scorching—you know how ideas spread."

KANE, looking back, saw a patch of flame well upstream, along the Cotabato River. It was working as Ryan had predicted. Men inland, seeing the sweep of fires nearer the coast, had been caught by the same recklessness that had swept the natives of the capital. The touch of guerrilla violence, guerrilla fire, guerrilla shooting, had released the long pent-up spirits of the townsmen, and the men of the *bondoks* had reacted the same way.

Don Ramón said, "I think those are the fields of my people. I like to think so, I hope so. If we starve, we starve, but this is good."

Then Kane remembered something. "The Bishop's pagans? How come? They went home with their money. How come they—"

Ryan's laugh was good to hear. "Those Zambo pagans—they're too honest to live! You know what they did? They dashed home, dashed back and brought the Bishop all the cutch in creation. He'd paid them for it, and by God, he'd get it. And then when he got through laughing his head off—it seems you really can't pronounce 'cutch' around him

without driving him into spasms—he decided that a long line of pagans could set the fire. They swore that the wind would be just right, and it was."

As they neared the junction of the Cotabato road with Highway One, Kane saw headlights coming from the left. He counted them, and groaned. "All the Skibbies in Parang, and driving like the hammers of hell! If it's not a whole battalion, I'll eat your boots."

"Like hell you will! They're Peel boots, and I can't get another pair till there's two-way traffic between here and London. Keep your sarong on, we'll get to the crossroads in time."

Ramón Silang and the other farmers forgot about enjoying freedom. By the glare of burning rice fields, Kane noted the intent, beetle-browed squint of the Moro gunners; they were eager, unworried. Their only problem was to hang on until the racing truck got within range of the enemy.

"I told you we'd make it!" Ryan yelled.

Tires screeched. The truck whipped and slewed. A tire let go, and before the driver could get his foot off the brake, she'd made a double spin, nosed into a culvert and popped another shoe.

"They don't know who we are," Ryan said. "They don't know—"

He was racing back toward the junction. Headlights blazed a long glaring trail. The Moros were taking cover in the ditch. And then Kane saw the black mass that emerged from one side of the road leading down from Parang. There was a second and then a third, clearly silhouetted by the first headlights, though only for an instant. So swiftly had the obstacles materialized that the leading truck, trying to swerve, went into the ditch. The second, following at too small an interval, smashed into what Kane now knew were logs which hidden watchers had snaked across the highway with drag-lines.

He understood now, though one thing puzzled him. There was not the burst of gunfire that should have swept the convoy of Japs hurrying to Cotabato to quell what they called a civilian disorder. Brakes were screaming, whining; vehicles were whipping to an abrupt halt.

Miraculously, a platoon of uniformed men popped up, and in good order. There were shouts, questions and answers in Japanese. In the confusion, no one had time to wonder how one outfit could so quickly come out of the upset and tangle of trucks.

"Hell's hinges, that's fast work!" Kane said. "But when do we—"

Ryan chuckled. "Those are our boys. Ximenes is in command, with Hong Li talking Skibby."

A whistle shrilled. Officers raced about, surveying the damage. And then the strange platoon opened fire, at pistol range, pouring rifle slugs into the unsuspecting and confused huddle that milled about the trucks.

Kane and the others dashed forward. Now from the ditches on both sides as far as he could see, the blaze of fowling pieces loaded with homemade powder laced the darkness with their blaze, and homemade grenades grumbled. The fumes made a choking, blinding fog. Into it Moros bounded with *kris* and *kampilan*, cutting from both flanks. Men caught while still shaken by crackups, actual or narrowly averted; men flung against each other and trying to clamber out of tightly-packed trucks; men caught off guard by murderous fire from those they mistook for comrades—it was like shooting fish in a barrel.

Then came the methodical *krissing* of everything that walked, crawled or lay. After that, the looting, and finally the setting afire of the ditched vehicles. All this attended to, the guerrillas piled into the roadworthy trucks and raced inland on Highway One. They halted to touch off a blast to finish the Sinaui River Bridge. Black powder is old-fashioned, but with enough of it, you can do the job.

Taos were heading for the hills, leaving their blazing fields behind them. Kane, seeing the bundles the fugitives carried on their heads, said to Ryan, "I hope they've salvaged enough seed rice."

"They won't starve in the hills, though they'll get slim waistlines before this is over. Those Victory gardens won't quite do the trick, but they'll help, and the Christians can eat wild pig. Hell, I'll eat some myself!"

When they came to the lake at the head of Libungan Marsh, they pulled up and set the trucks afire. The Bishop hailed some shock-headed men who carried spears and wore G-strings. The pagans from Zamboanga flocked around him. And before more troops could come from Parang, Kane and the guerrillas were scattering over the game trails which led into the Buldun Mountains.

An hour later, he looked down through a rift in the dense forest and saw that the fire

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FOR VICTORY . . . BUY WAR BONDS

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was still going strong. East of the Libungan Marsh, there were blazing areas. However, much of the great L-shaped valley had not been touched. There was no sign of fire in the north and south stretch.

"Makes no difference," Ryan countered. "Hauling the crop to the coast is going to be a chore."

When they reached the level of the widely-scattered guerrilla colonies in the mountains two days later, Kane learned that the Lanao region, north of the hump, had had only sporadic fires; the fertile plateau surrounding the lake, the real rice bowl of Mindanao, was yielding its crops to the scythe.

"Makes no difference," Ryan repeated, as Kane pulled a long face. "As I told you the other day, there's the matter of transportation to the coast. If they try trucking it to Polloc Harbor"—he grinned, rubbed his hands together—"we'll be eating rice when fern-tops get tiresome and we get sick of driving away the pigs so we can dig up tubers for ourselves."

"Who's going to truck something?" a man demanded.

Kane looked up and saw the three Chinese brothers standing in a row: Hong Li, Hong Kua and Hong Tien, the San Francisco hatchetmen who looked like identical triplets.

The second carried on, "We just got the radio diddled into shape again."

Hong Tien added his bit. "Up Manila way, they're offering a big bonus for truck-owners to haul rice from Nueva Ecija. Seven million bushels with nowhere to go."

Then Hong Li, who had fixed the radio, took over again. "Get a load of what I just got. 'Civil disturbances in Zamboanga. Rioters breaking into government warehouses.' Is it coincidental, or did they get ideas when they heard what we did in Cotabato? I bet they weren't looking for carpet tacks. Say, what happened to that guy, Tugab?"

"He fell off the fire truck," Kane answered, "when we made that sharp turn at Highway One. He hit his head on a culvert and it finished him. I think someone shoved him."

When the Chinese detail left, Ramón Silang came out of the bamboo shelter which was to house his family. It was not quite as big as a single room of his house in Libungan, and it did not have translucent shell panes. Nor did the ex-*presidente* wear the store clothes in which he had escaped.

"For the duration, *señores*," he announced, "I do not wear pants and other refined garments. I like my new house. My son likes his new house." He smoothed out his sarong, regarded himself, nodded approvingly. "It is good to be a Filipino again. Now, about this Gregorio Tugab. Someone did push him from the truck. His hands were bound, he had no chance. But whoever pushed him was doing a kindness, is it not so?"

Ryan spat. "Of course, I'd planned a military commission to sit on the case, but skip it, Don Ramón."

"Yes, General," said the Bishop, " 'Vengeance is mine,' says the Lawd. Now these here pagan folks are getting homesick. They want permission to leave. They feel downright uncomfortable when they get out of their native swamps."

The men from Zamboanga lined up with their spears and their empty packs. Their chief addressed Ryan in dialect. Ryan answered in English. Neither could understand the other, but each knew that compliments were intended. The exchange completed, they filed silently into the forest.

"What did the guy say, Bishop?"

The Bishop's eyes began to twinkle, his face twitched and he doubled up. "General, they're hurrying home—for to—pick cutch! Pick—haw!—*cutch!* They're happy because you bought—all the—"

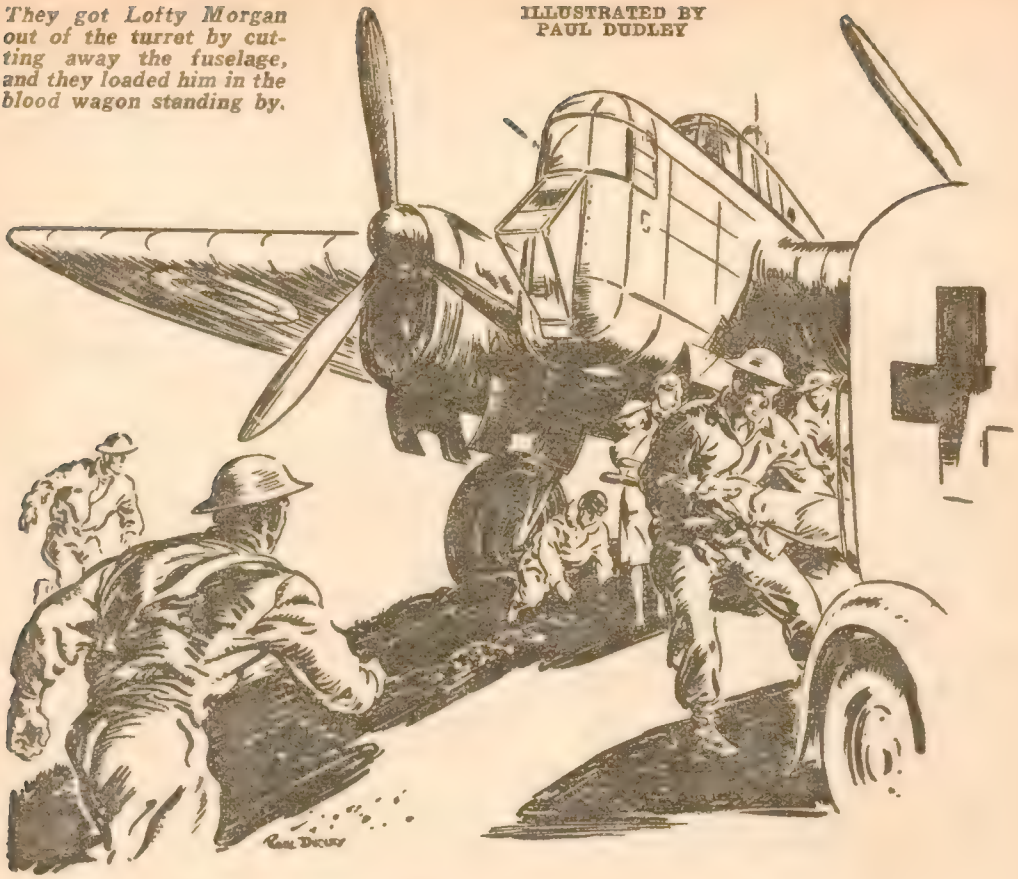
He went off, making the jungle echo with his laughter.

Ryan's Number Three wife offered the betel box.

"I'll bet," said Kane, as he declined a chew, "that on D-day, those fellows are going to offer the quartermaster the year's cutch crop."

They got Lofty Morgan out of the turret by cutting away the fuselage, and they loaded him in the blood wagon standing by.

ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL DUDLEY



IT'S A STORY THEY TELL

By

CHARLES A. FENTON

SHE was one of the old Whitleys. She had come out of the Vickers Armstrong factory back in 1937—her number was A7004—one of the real old ones.

The Whitley was a twin-engined aircraft, with a double tail unit like the ME 110, and she used a glycerin preparation in her petrol cocks which used to catch fire easily, and she burned very quickly.

But she was a good aircraft.

She carried about four tons of bombs, and she had a range which was long enough to do the Italy trips from a base in southern England. She wasn't a good climber, though, and you could spit on the Alps, you cleared them so close.

The Whitley carried a midunder turret, too. I guess it was the only English aircraft that ever did carry a midunder turret. We called that turret a dustbin, and you couldn't land a Whitley with the dustbin down. It extended well below the undercarriage. So the gunner raised the turret into the belly of the fuselage before you landed.

We had a midunder gunner named Lofty Morgan on the Squadron, and he used to fly in this beat-up old Whitley I'm talking about, the A7004.

This Lofty Morgan came to the Squadron about the time we finished doing those nickel raids—you know, pamphlets. We'd hit the sub pens at Kiel a few times and we'd done a lot of low levels on the French ports. But about the time Lofty came to the Squadron we got in the big time. We started going to the Ruhr.

Lofty was the boy who first called the Ruhr what we call it now.

"Man, that's Happy Valley, all right," he said one morning when we came back from Duisburg. "That's Happy Valley all right," he said, and that's what everybody calls it now.

JERRY had a belt of searchlights at that time which stretched right across the mouth of the Ruhr. Twenty-five miles deep, that belt was, just solid searchlights and ack-ack batteries. You had to go through the belt to get to any of the targets. It took eight minutes to get through, and it was no fun. Not in a Whitley, which cruised at a hundred and ten. That bloody Whitley. It used to fly nose down with this dustbin stuck out underneath, and we called it the Flying Coffin.

One night Lofty and his crew did Essen in this beat-up old A7004. We never gave our kites names.

Lofty was a big Welshman from the Cardiff pits. I always liked Lofty. He never said much that I remember, except that thing about Happy Valley, but he was a good midunder gunner, and a good boy to drink with. I always liked him.

I remember his pilot, too. He was one of those University Air Squadron boys. You know the type. Flown every type of aircraft from Wellesleys and Hawker Harts to Wellingtons and Lancasters. A nice boy from Winchester and Cambridge who didn't have a nerve in his body, and I don't think his crew ever understood him, but they certainly worshipped him. You used to see those University Air Squadron boys around London. They used to hang off the downstairs bar at Shepherd's, in the Market, not more than twenty years old, with that grace and good manners and arrogance like no one else in the world. They never said much except "cheerio" when they raised their glass. Which they did quite a lot. You don't see many of them around any more. Their caps used to be so crushed and dilapidated that you wondered how they ever stayed on their heads. Their uniforms were always made at Gieves. You remember them. They used to wear those pieces of leather padding in their elbows and on the cuffs of their sleeves. Once I heard somebody compare them to Dologhov in *War and Peace*. I don't know about that. But they were good boys to fly with. You don't see many of them around any more.

Well, Lofty Morgan was his midunder gunner. I don't remember anyone else in the crew. You meet so many guys. I only remember Lofty and the pilot.

They got to Essen all right this particular night, through the searchlight belt, and they pranged the target well. Essen was a hot target in those days, as hot as Hamburg. The target at Essen was always the Krupp works, and they used to wheel out all sorts of guns. They used to say that Jerry just rolled back the roofs of the factories and let you have it. Anyway, it was the most intense flak I ever saw, and they had tracer and light flak, and what we called heavy flak, which they use up to 20,000 feet. We never got that high in a Whitley. They used to turn the balloons loose at Essen during the raids, I remember, and lots of kites were knocked out by those runaway balloons.

But Lofty and his crew made the bomb-run all right and got the load away, and then when they were coming out they got coned in the lights.

You know what it's like. You see the blue master light go on, down on the ground, and you yell to the skipper and he does a steep turn and loses a lot of height quick and then there's a dozen white lights on you and the skipper can't see his instruments and the gunners can't see through their perspex on the turrets. And you're trying to dive out of the lights and you don't know if you're on your back or on a wing. And then the guns pick you up. *Whoof! Whoof!* Great dirty black smudges of flak. You know what it's like.

Well, anyway, they were in this cone for about four minutes, which is a long time in a cone, and then the skipper brought them out and they headed for home.

But Lofty, sitting there in the midunder turret and firing down the searchlight beams, had caught a real packet. He'd caught a lot of flak. He was pretty bad. They could hear him screaming over the inter-com tube. Then he switched it off himself. But I guess he was still screaming.

The wireless operator went aft to get Lofty out of the turret. But the hydraulic system had been hit and there was no more oil pressure, so the wireless op couldn't raise the turret. He started to pull Lofty up out of the turret. But Lofty was a little fellow, of course—we always called the shrimps Lofty—and he had crumbled down in the bottom of the bin and the wireless op couldn't get a proper hold on him. And every time he just managed to touch Lofty, why Lofty screamed like hell. He had caught a real packet. So he was still in the turret when they were finally over the French coast and across the Channel. And finally they were over the drome, and Lofty still in the midunder turret.

THEY didn't know what to do. You can picture it. They couldn't get the dustbin up, and of course they couldn't land with it down. There's not enough clearance. There was no way around it. And there was Lofty in the dustbin, and they couldn't get him out. If it hadn't been for Lofty they could have just dumped her in and hoped for the best, but there he was, crumpled up in the bin, still alive, still conscious, still screaming, I guess.

So they called up the control tower and asked for instructions. The tower asked the skipper how much petrol he had left. Enough for forty-five minutes' flying, the skipper told them. All right, stand by, the tower ordered.

Well, that was a big help.

The skipper circled the drome again. Then the tower told him to keep on circling the drome. And they flew around the circuit again. They'd been up about eight hours by this time and they'd had a rough trip. They weren't carrying a second pilot, either.

After about ten minutes of circling the field they noticed a lot of activity on the runway. Everybody on the station seemed to be out on the center runway. We had grass runways in those days, remember. They made another circuit of the drome, and I guess they wondered what those damn penguins were up to. That's what we always called the ground crews. You know, birds that don't fly. But they were good boys.

And then they understood what the ground crews were up to.

They were digging a ditch straight down the runway. It was a ditch about four feet wide and about five feet deep. That's a lot of ditch to dig quickly; but it's not much ditch to set a heavy aircraft into. That's what that pilot had to do. If he slipped off line when he brought the Whitley in, why Lofty had had it. It would be like crushing an egg shell in your hand. And those ground crew boys were digging fast. They knew the Whitley only had about thirty-five minutes of flying time now.

And so the kite kept on circling the drome and down below they kept on digging the ditch and pretty soon the engines coughed the way they do, and the skipper switched over to the emergency tank. Thirty minutes had gone. And down below they seemed to be digging a little faster, if that was possible.

The wireless op left his set and went back to have another look at Lofty. He was still alive.

"I wish he'd pass out," the wireless op said to the skipper. "He's still conscious; but I wish he'd pass out."

"Quite," the skipper said.

Then the gang down below with the shovels moved back from the ditch, and they stood along the perimeter track, looking up at the Whitley. From the air the crew could see the crash wagon and ambulance standing by with their engines running.

The control tower called up. "You may land," they told the skipper. It was all very English.

"Thank you," said the skipper. "E for Edward. Coming in to land." He was a pretty good boy.

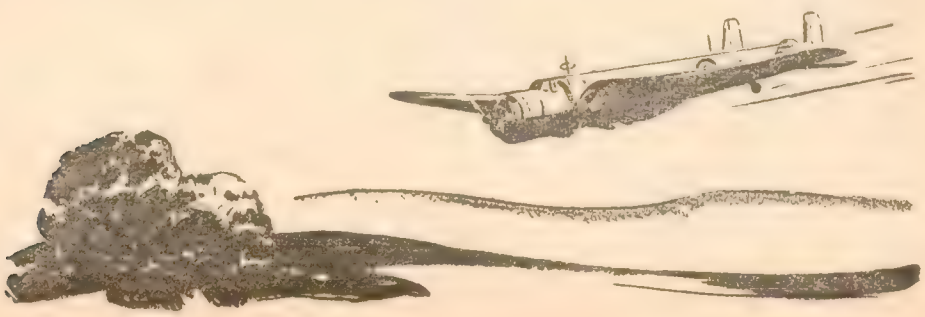
He made a righthand circuit and brought in that beat-up old Whitley. Just like that. He just made a right hand circuit and brought her in. But I'll bet he never took a longer approach than he did that day. He set her down right in the ditch, the dustbin inside the ditch, and Lofty inside the dustbin.

The ground crew were cheering and yelling and even the la-dee-da chap in the control tower forgot himself and said, "My God!" There were riggers and fitters and cooks and clerks and officers in that crowd with the shovels and they didn't stop yelling and cheering for a long time. Even WAAFS were there with shovels.

And that's the story. They got Lofty Morgan out of the turret by cutting away the fuselage, and they loaded him in the blood wagon, and he was all right. They gave the skipper a DFC, and I guess the next night at Shepherd's he said "cheerio" quite a few times.

Lofty lived all right—for a couple of years. He got the chop at Cologne, the big one in '42. But his hair was dead white when they took him out of that dustbin.

It's just a story they tell. Then they sing *There's Only A Few Of Us Left*, and they go to bed.



THE LEGUMINOUS PATIENCE OF AH SAM

By
NEILL C. WILSON

When the last wagon got to the Knob, its front wheels were pointed down the three-mile slope and the rig given a push.

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE WERT

I WAS a boy, working on Father's paper, when horse stages were just beginning to pull out of the way for gasoline, pigtailed Chinese were still in the van of every gold rush, and the livest new town in our sagebrush State of Nevada was Panorama City. We at Medallion were two hundred miles away, but the stories of Panorama City's doing in that year 1906 came to us across the desert like carnival horns, and its lights seemed to shimmer at night on the horizon.

The boom camp clung three thousand feet up the side of a dry mountain. We kept track of its deeds and misdeeds through its newspaper, the *Telescope*, which Father read column by column, shears in hand. But we were also visited at times by Hi Goodenough, the *Telescope's* editor. Hi loved to talk. That is how we came to hear the stories about Ah Sam.

"Keep your eye on him," said Hi. "He's headed for trouble."

Nobody in Panorama City knew where Ah Sam hailed from. Or cared. He was a Chinese. He'd come up the trail wearing a felt hat punched out round, like a bowl, which was his heedless way of flouting white men's customs. In our region a man creases or peaks his hat and cocks its brim till it's his personal signature, and he expects other men to do the same. You can size people up by their hats. Under Ah Sam's noncommittal head-cover was a high-cheeked face with pod-shaped eyes that were set among good-humored little lines. Reaching the camp on soft felt soles and in white socks that had managed to stay clean, he'd rented a shanty and opened up a restaurant. He found a wagon tire and hung it outside for a dinner gong.

Ah Sam specialized in beans. Boiled beans. Sometimes fried steaks, sometimes eggs, but always beans. Hi Goodenough, dropping in on us while making a political swing around the state, told us an incident about those beans. It seems that a tumbleweed named Bill Stryker rolled into town from the desert fairly strangling for a change of grub. He entered the restaurant, took off a big hat peaked Montana fashion and frayed from fanning many campfires, and hollered, "Chink, got any vegtubbles?"

"Yah-yah! Lotsa vegtebbles," Ah Sam answered, and handed him a plate of beans.

"I ain't a-gonna eat them things!" Bill Stryker roared over his black whiskers. "I been cooking that chuck at the heels of a mule every night for six weeks. You bring me *fresh* vegtubbles. Radishes and tomaters, see? I'll set here till I get 'em."

"Yah-yah," Ah Sam said, and went outside. He came back and went on with his cook business.

"When am I gonna see my fresh vegtubbles?" demanded Bill.

Ah Sam made crinkles around his eyes. "I plant seeds now. When they grow."

EVERYBODY in the restaurant except Bill joined in the chuckle. Bill looked hard to see if his host was daring to rib him, but Ah Sam fetched him a cup of coffee, and shuffled off. Bill finally ate his beans.

"Watch what'll happen now," Hi advised Father and me. "Stryker's a wit himself. The practical kind. He works hard at his reputation. That basket-colored heathen won't have a chance." He added, "It's always open season on Chinamen in a mining camp, anyhow."

Hi was right about a sequel. Bill Stryker considered himself bottled-in-bond, hundred-proof stuff and he didn't like being trifled with. He brooded over it, and he came up with a way to get even.

I dare say Ah Sam should have been more prudent, at that. The Chinese Exclusion Act had been law for a generation, but members of his race were still holding jobs all over the West and were the butt of crude horseplay and much heartless treatment. Stryker talked it over with some of the Irish, Swedes, Welshmen, Finns and other white Americans on hand and he won their strong support. Hi Goodenough had the story in type even before it happened, and he sent us a galley proof.

It seems there was a Fourth of July celebration, with a grand parade. Four wagons, decorated very fancily, lugged about thirty selected lovelies of the district known as Moonlight Alley. Another float toted the local wives, of whom there were several, properly churched to their men and mighty grim and proud about it. Followed a freighter-load of popular saloon owners in plug hats. And in the last vehicle, an ore wagon, trundled Panorama City's whole Chinese population, to the number of twelve.

To make all passengers feel distinguished, the floats were pulled by hand for half a mile from the Wells Fargo office to a point known as Lookout Knob. But when the last wagon got to the Knob, its front wheels were twisted to point downhill and its pole locked upright and the whole rig given a push. There was a three-mile swoop of drop-offs, bounces, caroms and leaps and Hi's article said the slope rained Chinese from the Knob clear down to Borax Sink.

Most of the dozen never returned. They picked themselves up and kept on going to hunt for another camp. But one climbed back up the hill, to cook supper and hammer on his wagon tire as usual. Hi's paper just did manage to squeeze in a bulletin about that fact before going to press.

Ah Sam, it seemed, really liked Panorama City.

By the time Father and I had received and read Hi's paper with its last-minute bulletin, we felt as if we knew Ah Sam, and what we knew about him we liked. "He's a real human being," Father said, "likely a damn sight humaner one than the scamps who plagued him."

I didn't know then what great friends Ah Sam and I were to become. I only knew about him from a two hundred mile distance. But Panorama City, having had its fun, evidently admired his spunk for coming back, for he was allowed to stay. After all, he was a clean, hard-working cook.

But Stryker, it turned out, considered this return a personal challenge. He watched for another chance to deal with this son of Confucius. Pretty soon it came.

The Asiatics, of course, are great gamblers. With his fellow-countrymen run out of town, Ah Sam had nobody to buck at pie-gow, fantan and chuck-a-luck, and I guess he grew tired of spending his nights with his two-string Chinese fiddle playing serenades to himself. One night, after tidying up his cafe, he shuffled into the Miners' Club Saloon and took a seat in a corner.

Bill Stryker spied him. The sight filled Bill with joy.

"You wantee play poker, Sam?" he called out. Ah Sam nodded. The boys, at a whisper from Bill, made room.

All evening their visitor paid out and paid out. But about four A.M., when a pot had grown very nice and a general look-see was called for, Ah Sam with a sort of sympathizing sigh laid down his hand. Those diamonds, starting big, ran downhill as evenly spaced as buckets on a tram rope. Ah Sam swept in his chips.

But Stryker was banker, and he was ready. He said, with a smile that gashed his black whiskers, "Of course, after midnight, the house rules change around here and we're only playing for beans. That's clear, isn't it?"

All the players joined, "That's right, Sam. House rules. Chips are only good for beans after midnight. Looks like we owe you a couple quarts of beans."

Ah Sam couldn't have forgotten his float ride. It's probable he didn't want another. He crinkled his eyes as if he just loved the joke, and he went home to his shanty. Folks said he could be heard playing real reflective on his fiddle the rest of the night.

"It's about his turn now," said Father when we were told of this episode. "He'll find some way to even up the score."

He did, sure enough.

It was some days after, and Bill was in the restaurant fanging a fried steak. Ah Sam sat down at the other side of the counter and started running dry beans through his fingers, sifting them for gravel the way a careful cook always does. His fingers stopped something bright. Quick as thought, Ah Sam closed his hand and slid the object under a plate. A moment later he picked out and hid another.

Bill, without letting on that he'd seen, had become powerfully interested. Those beans looked like they'd been grown on mighty rich ground, maybe old placer diggings, and the nuggets picked up in the harvesting. Without finishing his steak, Bill got up and left like he was walking on eggs. Soon as he was outside he made tracks to the Panorama City Mercantile Company, where Ah Sam always bought his supplies, and there Bill explained that he was going on a long prospecting trip and had urgent need for provisions.

I guess the mercantile people thought he was going away for about a thousand years, for he bought their whole stock of beans. Bill had the forty gunnysacks hauled to his cabin and he started prospecting then and there, running every bean through his fingers and looking close at each pebble and bit of clay. Somebody peeked through his window and saw him at his labors. But Bill found never a nugget of anything bright, nor flake nor grain. He sold the beans back to the store for what he could get. The boys gave him an unmerciful time about that. Ah Sam, though, didn't say anything.

Bill had the forty gunnysacks hauled to his cabin and started prospecting.

What happened next was one of the things Panorama City really lived for—a new treasure strike. A miner was hired to work an old tunnel under a cap of creamy yellow rock, and first day he was in there he broke into an area that made him blink. He came out babbling and groping for strong drink. The spot, he gasped, had glowed like a Christmas tree when he lifted a lantern to it.

The *Telescope*, although almost ready to go to press, came out with two columns of nonpareil, set solid, about the find.

"Hi Goodenough is up to something," Father commented when the mail brought us this edition. "He had that type up in advance. Just where was this strike made?"

"Up behind the Wagon Tire Restaurant," I told him. "It's called The Great Wagon Tire Bonanza. Only—this is a butch on Hi—look, it's spelled Beananza."

"H'mm," said Father.

Other issues of the *Telescope* continued to print stories about that Aladdin's cave and Hi himself, later on, told us the outcome. It seems the hook caught. Ah Sam heard so much talk that he trudged down into that hole with Hi holding the lantern, took a dazzled look, and practically begged to buy in. Hi consented to act as agent. Ah Sam counted four hundred dollars into his hands out of a buckskin bag.

That was the only share in the property that anybody bought. The camp was suspicious of the way those spangles followed a birdshot pattern. Ah Sam became wise, too, when he learned that Bill Stryker had bought the ground a week before his hired miner made that discovery. Bill and Hi and the boys had pleasure with Ah Sam's money at the Miners' Club. It kept folks laughing a while longer.

The camp needed each hour of laughter it could get, for you know how mining camps are. Up today, down tomorrow. After its terrific flush times, the place woke up to the fact that all its gold was dug and its silver coming out of thinning pipes. One by one the mines shut down. People drifted away. Hi Goodenough wrote ringing editorials urging them not to go, but go they did. Presently he followed. We heard that he started a paper in Arizona which came to a sudden end, from subscriber trouble.

The day came when Ah Sam was the only inhabitant of that string of buildings that had been Panorama City. But he had faith. As property reverted to the county, he picked up what he liked for the taxes. He stayed on, sawing his two-string fiddle for entertainment and going out and pounding on his wagon tire three times a day. Prospectors winding through the dry gulches below, hearing that far-borne gong on the still air, came to know that they could always count on Ah Sam to serve them something to eat—generally not much else but beans, but anyway beans.

THE name Panorama City became forgotten. The huddle of vacant buildings came to be known as Beantown. Some of the visitors who arrived at Beantown were pretty far gone. Ah Sam did more than feed them. Many a busted man, after resting, pushed onward with fresh courage as the grubstaked partner of the understanding restaurant man.

That's the way time passed until one of Ah Sam's customers up there at Beantown went out behind the weathered cafe to set up a new outhouse. He sank a pick in the ground and he came running back to the shack as if his shoes were afire. He had some yellow-white rocks in his fist.

Ah Sam's visitor powdered up the chunks, heated the bits with acid, dipped in a piece of tin—and the mix turned blue. Scheelite, the ore of tungsten trioxide! Stuff the world wanted badly for electric light filaments, new-fangled radio tubes and tool steel. Scheelite was worth twenty dollars a ton for each percent of tungsten trioxide it contained, and this turned out to be seventy percent pure. Fourteen hundred dollars a ton!

That brought Panorama City back with a whoop. Scorpion and pack rat were swept out, signs brightened up, lights lit, and the town in that year 1922 became its old self. Father long since laid away and our veteran Cranston two-roller press falling to pieces at Medallion, I locked up, and hustled over to the reborn metropolis, where Ah Sam gave me the keys to the *Telescope* office and told me I was editor.

Ah Sam's restaurant was going full blast.

The man who never had lost faith had three waitresses to help him but he made change and looked every customer full in the face, saying "Yah-yah!" to those he knew. Seemed like he always had known these old acquaintances would be coming back. And one noon he saw, lined up for a seat at his counter, the party whom maybe he'd been lonesomest for. There was the bully who'd organized the roller-coaster ride that sent a load of unoffending Chinese looping and hoopsnaking out of camp sixteen years before. The cheater who'd paid off Ah Sam's handsome card hand in beans. The swindler who'd stuck him for a share in a piece of ground spangled with gold dust out of a ten-gauge shotgun.

Bill Stryker hadn't got any quieter. "Hey, Chink!" he yelled. "Whatchee got today? Steak and vegtubbles, huh?"

Ah Sam really had steaks, thick ones, and fresh vegetables too, for with the boom had come modern improvements, and there was a daily express running from Salt Lake City. He set Bill up to the best.

What we of the *Telescope* called the recrudescence of Panorama City was really something. The world was hungry for tungsten and our dry mountain had it. There was the bank, and Ah Sam owned it. There were the bustling saloons, the packed hotels. Trucks rumbled up and down the grade, dirt flew, and claims moved like flapjacks jumping in a pan.

Except one property, which Ah Sam owned entirely now and wouldn't let go any part of. That was the piece behind his shack. It was the biggest chunk of tungsten in the district—geologists said so. Ah Sam's refusal to sell had a lot of people in a lather. Bill Stryker called him a hoarder and a progress-blocker and was for making up a party and throwing him out of town all over again. But the feeling against Chinese in the West had changed, and anyway the proprietor of the Wagon Tire Restaurant by this time had friends. Men he'd fed and nursed and lent shoes to and sent on their way with renewed hope. These conveyed to iron-whiskered Bill that anybody who got rough with Ah Sam would find himself the tassel to a rope under a head frame.

Ah Sam was mighty good to me. He sent me to San Francisco for a new press and any equipment I wanted, and he gave me a further errand to do down there. A queer one. I was to go to the best restaurant I could find, and bring away a bill of fare for each meal. And when I got back to camp, I was told to make copies of these bills word for word, with "Wagon Tire Restaurant, Ah Sam Prop." instead of "Palace Hotel." Ah Sam liked my copies fine. He put them under his counter. And he had another job for me. To print some stock certificates for twenty thousand shares. He took the certificates and shoved them into his safe.

When Stryker heard this, he came hurrying. He just about haunted Ah Sam, sitting at the counter and offering and arguing, until Ah Sam, breaking down beneath this bluster, said, "Yah-yah!"

It was at mealtime. When Ah Sam said that he'd part with some shares, every knife and fork stopped in mid-air. I know, for I was there. Bill looked almighty proud and pleased. Before the deal went any further, Ah Sam handed him one of those bills of fare I'd printed.

"Whatchee like? Eat before business," directed the Chinese.

It was the first time those big cards of mine had been shown to anybody. When Bill saw he was being offered fresh oysters, hangtown fries, planked steaks, mixed greens and tutti-fruttis—things men only dream about in sage-brush country—his eyes went round. "I'll take this—and this—and some of these here," Bill pointed. Everybody in the shack was reading over Bill's shoulder and ordering, too.

"Yah-yah," said Ah Sam cheerfully, and started his helpers serving what they asked for. But before Bill Stryker he plunked down three plates of beans. "You buy stock in Glate Wagon Tire Beananza, first you eat plenty these. Hangtown flies come latah."

Bill started to bellow. Ah Sam walked away.

"All right," Bill caved in. Everybody was laughing. Bill was so mad his whiskers stuck straight out, but he was there to buy, not fight. Anything to get his hands on the land he once had owned!

Ah Sam waited until Bill had cleaned the three plates. He opened his safe and took out one slip of paper. "You pay four dollahs, take-um one hundled shares," he said.

Bill paid the four dollars fast and boomed. "But I want more, sabby? All!"

"You come back at blekfast."

That's the way it was. Bill returned in the morning, and was handed a card about iced grapefruit, trout, eggs benedictine and grilled kidneys, things he could see others of us stowing away. He ordered the lot—and was given plates of beans instead. Which he ate, and was granted a hundred more shares. When he tried to expand the deal, Ah Sam said, "You come back at noon." Bill began to get the idea. He was going to eat his way into that mine like a weevil.

By midday I guess he thought he had beans coming out of his ears. By nightfall he must have felt them coming out of his shoes. But he knew he was being let in at a give-away price, so back he came. He went to work in the tunnel so as to be near his prize and keep lean and hungry for that straight diet of legumes. Every shovelful of ore that he lifted being worth about three dollars, he simply made himself wilder to own more stock. If he could keep on with that fare for a couple of months, Ah Sam could laugh but Bill would have the mine. That's how he figured.

But Bill was wrong. On the thirty-third day, Ah Sam handed him the tantalizing food list as usual and then brought him exactly what he had goggled at—Olympia oysters, squab on toast, peas, artichoke, prime rib of beef, mince pie, and fresh strawberries. Bill's stock-buying spree had ended at forty-nine percent. Ah Sam was keeping fifty and nine-tenths. The other tenth of one percent I'd got for being secretary. It nearly killed Bill to find he wasn't going to have control, but this ninety-ninth meal was so grand that it sort of soothed him down. For an hour or two. Then he began to yell.

After Bill ran out of breath, we held a directors' meeting. A good bit of ore had been shipped. On Ah Sam's motion, seconded by me, we declared a dividend.

The dividend was one pound of beans per share—navy, soy, pink, kidney, lima or Mexican jumping, as the stockholder might wish.

This time Bill Stryker really yelped. He screamed like a dry axle going down Lookout Grade. Ah Sam, sitting tight, said, "The Glate Wagon Tire pay in beans, sabby? House rules. Only beans." I wrote Bill out an order on the mercantile company, and we adjourned.

What we got for our tungsten at Los Angeles was tucked away down there in the National Bank.

OVER the next few weeks Bill Stryker was a bad man to mention a certain word to, though he heard it plenty. His temper got to working on such a short fuse that a gathering of citizens finally took him to the bottom of the grade and he was given a well-packed mule and told to go on a vacation. Bill had often helped with farewells like that for other people, and he knew what it meant.

He was only a little ahead of his farewell-wishers, at that. For Panorama City, after its second big era, slumped again. The price of scheelite couldn't stand up under all that production. What further tungsten the world wanted could be dug more cheaply at Yellow Pine, Idaho. Panorama's population once more moved down the trail and the owl and the bat, the coyote and the centipede moved back in. Ah Sam gave me the fine new rotary press and the linotype and I brought them back here to Medallion.

Ah Sam stays on up there on his dry mountain where twice there was so much bustle and hum; he still has faith in that camp. But he's no longer its lone inhabitant. After some years of wandering around without luck, Bill Stryker got to thinking about his forty-nine percent, and decided to return. He peeked over the top of the grade to see if Ah Sam minded. Ah Sam didn't. Twice a year I go over and we declare a cash dividend—small, because Ah Sam wants that fine surplus ready when things revive.

Between our directors' meetings, Bill's host goes outside three times a day and bangs on his wagon tire and white-whiskered Bill enters the shanty, forks stool and opens a beautiful old bill of fare, which he looks at sourly. For no matter what he reads, he knows what he will eat. It will be abalones, planked steaks, chicken Maryland and the freshest of fresh vegetables some day, when Panorama City booms again. But undoubtedly, under present conditions, it is beans.

As we waded ashore, a group of the island's inhabitants, led by a tall, elderly white man, appeared around the promontory.

THE island of Sacré Coeur, in the far-flung Bermoothes, is the most bizarre and the most beautiful place I have ever seen. You would expect it to be inhabited by Prospero and Caliban, with Ariel jigging about on invisible wires. Actually, its population includes an assortment of ants, thousands of species of malevolent flies, innumerable mosquitoes, some sick cattle, a Welsh missionary called the Reverend Ezekiel Rowlands, Bachelor of Arts (Aberystwyth) and minister of Capel Sion, a voodoo god called Zamballah, a

ILLUSTRATED BY L. STERNE STEVENS

ZAMBALLAH AND THE REVEREND

By JOHN MOORE

couple of hundred natives mostly suffering from yaws, and a witch. There was also a little black boy called Man Friday who was the only cheerful person in the place; but he isn't there any longer.

We called him Man Friday because he was the first human being we saw after our forced landing. We had been catapulted from our cruiser to search for a suspected blockade-runner; a tropical storm had affected our compass and we had lost ourselves. When we were nearly out of petrol we spotted a pyramid of cotton-woolly cumulus piled up like a snow-man on the northern horizon, and it led us to Sacré Coeur—for in those parts every islet wears its tall top-hat of cloud. We landed in a long narrow bay which was so crystal-clear that we could see the sharks scurrying away before our awful and expanding shadow. When the Walrus came to rest, we anchored and climbed out on the wing to have a look around. Evans, our telegraphist-air-gunner, said somberly, "*Deawl!* Like the films in tech-nicolor it is!"

He didn't approve of the tropics, holding that one gray Glamorgan valley, pitheads, slate roofs, tin bethels and all, was worth all the outlandish foreign parts that man in his folly had ever gone on expensive pleasure cruises to see.

He added disapprovingly, "Look at those flowers! Like great red, hungry mouths of tarts."

The jungle, multitudinously green, came down almost to the water's edge. There was a clump of hibiscus around which one sensed, rather than saw, a ceaseless flickering of hummingbirds. Great patches of orange-red cassela exploded like bomb-bursts at night. On the fringe of the jungle flamed dozens of flamboyant trees. As Evans said, it took your breath away; but if you saw it on a picture postcard you'd think it a bit vulgar.

Timothy, my observer, exclaimed suddenly, "Hullo! Here comes Man Friday!"

During the glide down, I had noticed cultivations and a few buildings huddled around the next bay to the north. "Man Friday" now came running around the promontory which divided this northern bay from ours. He was aged about seven, jet-black, and entirely naked. Instead of following the curve of the beach, he plunged into the water and took a shortcut by swimming. He swam extremely fast, using an effortless crawl. Approaching us, he disappeared under water and finally came up under our starboard wing.

He shook his black frizzly head, grinned, and shouted, "Hello, Joe! Throw penny!"

Tim found one and tossed it toward him. The boy turned a somersault like a gobbling duck, kicked his little pink heels in the air, and down he went through the clear water in which the penny gleamed and flashed as it sank toward the bottom. His small fist shot out to secure it, and he rose grinning and spluttering, trod water under the wing, and yelled, "'Nother! Throw penny, Joe! Throw 'nother penny!"

We spent about sixpence on his antics, in spite of an uncomfortable feeling that we might be sacrificing him to the sharks; but perhaps they were harmless, or feared our airplane, or respected small boys who could swim almost as well as they could. Anyhow, they kept away.

There now appeared, walking around the promontory, a group of the island's sedater inhabitants. They were led by a tall, elderly white man who wore an alpaca coat, gray trousers and a Panama hat. We waded ashore to meet them, pursued by Man Friday, whose insatiable desire for pennies suggested that the island was at least civilized enough to possess a sweet shop.

It was certainly civilized enough to possess a church; for the tall white man explained to us that he was the minister. "I have but a small flock," he said, with a slight, conventional smile, "and mostly black sheep in it." He indicated the handful of starvelings who stood unsmiling—and, it seemed to us, unwelcoming—behind him. "And it is a far cry from Capel Sion on the mountain, and the long gray valleys, and the Eisteddfodaun. But I like to think that the Lord has worked for me here."

"What part of Wales do you come from?" asked Evans eagerly.

"Brynmawr. My father was Rowlands postmaster. But that was long, long ago. It is like—like looking in a glass darkly. I have lived on Sacré Coeur for twenty years."

"Twenty years!"

The old man nodded. "And never before," he said, "never in twenty years have I had visitors out of the sky. You are very welcome."

WE experienced great difficulty in sending a message to our ship. "Full of gremlins the bloody wireless is," chanted Evans, "and the whole fleet will be searching for us, and they will send a telegram to my mother to say that drowned I am!" But at last we got in touch, and Evans told the cruiser our tale of woe. She replied rather tersely that she would "proceed to position indicated and embark us in a few days' time." Apparently she was busy hunting the blockade-runner. Our captain hated airplanes anyhow, and probably felt that he was well rid of us. We wondered whether he knew that Sacré Coeur was inhabited, or whether he imagined we were living on coconuts.

We heaved the Walrus up on the beach (assisted, of course, by Man Friday, who crawled about inside the fuselage and nearly set off the fire-extinguisher), and then we walked around the promontory to the minister's bungalow, where he had invited us to stay. Man Friday led the way, chasing blue Morpho butterflies along the fringe of the jungle. The Reverend Ezekiel had gone ahead to prepare for us.

On the way we had a curious and rather uncomfortable encounter. We met a woman of about forty, who was walking in the opposite direction, and as we passed her she was smiling, but not at us. She was tall and striking-looking and she wore flowers in her hair, but her eyes were feverish in her hard, cruel face, and she walked gracefully and wickedly, as a cat walks. Tim said, "She gives me the creeps," and I nodded.

Man Friday, in pursuit of a Morpho, had lagged behind, and we saw the woman stop and speak to him. He ran away from her, crying, and came to us as if for protection. He was whimpering like a frightened dog. We asked him what the woman had said, and who she was, but he would not answer. She walked on and disappeared from sight around the promontory; and soon Man Friday dried his tears, though he didn't chase butterflies any more. He stayed close to us.

Evans said, as if it were the most natural

thing in the world, "She was a witch, didn't you realize?"

"What nonsense, Dai!" I said.

"We haf witches in Wales, too," he said complacently.

We went on our way, and came to the bungalow.

If you saw a picture postcard of it, you would remark on the charming contrast which the pretty whitewashed bungalow made with the bright green foliage behind it; on the little wooden church, incongruous perhaps but rather gallant, standing in its small triangular clearing hard-won from the jungle; and on the mass multicolored flowers which formed a kind of hedge around church and bungalow alike. I had never seen so many flowers so closely packed together, except at a graveside; but they were not all flowers, for as we approached a number of them took wing, detached themselves and flew away. Man Friday, his fears forgotten, ran off in pursuit.

Yes, the minister's bungalow would look very nice on a picture postcard, with the biscuit-colored beach in front of it lapped by the deep blue sea, and the casseia and the hibiscus and the great tawny tiger-lilies. But the postcard wouldn't show the flies, the mold, the marching ants, the ceaseless pinging mosquitoes; and in the picture those great trees, the jungle's outposts and advance-guards, would look benevolent and sheltering, instead of suffocating and malign.

One had a dreadful feeling, in that bungalow, that one was cornered, surrounded and invested by the jungle. It was closing in all the time. It infiltrated, crept in, unseen and unheard. Its poisonous breath, clammy, steamy, all-pervading, seeped through floorboards and skirtings and walls, condensed on the tables and chairs, blurred the windows, made the sheet on one's bed feel as cold as a shroud. " 'All the infections that the sun sucks up,' " said the Reverend Ezekiel, who had a trick of apt quotation and a lot of untidy scholarship. Our white shoes were covered with bright green mold every morning. How they grew, those molds! The invisible spores of the fungi came in with the wind and the rain. A slice of bread left on the table overnight would be furred with long green penicillia next day; a fresh mango, in a few hours, would be turned into a mass of mushy slime.

Then there were the ants.

"I have seen them marching in the jungle," said the Reverend Ezekiel, "and I have been sinner enough to question God's purpose in creating so many. I have seen the monuments they raise to themselves, and I have reflected that they may be more permanent than my own Capel Sion."

Sometimes they marched out of the jungle and invaded his territory. The cruelest thing they had done was to destroy, in a night, more

She was smiling, but not at us. Her eyes were feverish in her hard, cruel face.

than half his precious store of books. Plato, Shakespeare, the *Mabinogion* were empty shells; the bindings remained, their hearts were eaten out. You opened *Romeo and Juliet* and the printed page crumbled away before your eyes—as transitory, as impermanent, as love itself.

"Anything you value," said the Reverend Ezekiel, "should be placed on a table, and the legs of the table stood in pails of water. Fortunately, the creatures cannot swim."

THERE were other enemies. One looked inside one's shoes in the morning lest a scorpion lay hidden there. One walked delicately for fear of snakes. A myriad assorted flies assailed one. And there were the mosquitoes.

"I used to be very careful about them," said the Reverend Ezekiel. "I used to take precautions." He shrugged his shoulders. His shaky hand, his wasted frame, told the rest of the tale. "But you get tired," he went on. "Tired of draining ditches and pouring paraffin into puddles. One night there is a big tear in your mosquito net, but you are tired, and you say to yourself, There are a million harmless ones to each Anopheles, and even an Anopheles can't hurt one unless he has bitten somebody else who's got it. So you lie in bed, and you hear *ping! ping! ping!* and you think of those comforting odds; but somehow the Theory of Averages doesn't seem to work."

He got a recurrence, now, every season. He has grown resigned to it. But even between bouts he wasn't as fit as he used to be. Things that once were easy were too much trouble now. His little bit of cleared land, held on sufferance from the jungle, had already begun to dwindle. Locusts had destroyed the flower-garden in which, he told us proudly, an English rose had precariously blossomed three years ago. The pathetic pretense of a lawn withered and disappeared one dry season; and during the subsequent rains the jungle made a sudden sortie and recaptured the carefully-dug patch where he used to raise English vegetables. He was too tired, too weak to counter-attack. "The vegetables were never much good," he pleaded. "The peas were luxuriant, but they had no flavor. The potatoes were huge, watery and soft. And it's difficult to get the seed in wartime."

So he let the jungle consolidate its gains. It advanced a few yards further, constricting him, trying to squeeze him out. A Fifth Column, consisting of enormous yellow fungi, had already established itself outside the front door. In Capel Sion itself, the tendrils of some vigorous vine were pushing up through the wooden floor. The Reverend Ezekiel lopped them off weekly; but it made no difference, they soon grew again. He routed up their roots, but new shoots appeared next day.

"'*Naturam expelles furca,*'" he said with a shrug and a smile, "'*tamen usque recurret.*'" That summed up his attitude to the jungle now; he didn't fight it any more, he accepted it. "How it grows!" he exclaimed wearily. "How literally it obeys God's command, 'Be fruitful and multiply.' Yet I have dared to wonder, sometimes, whether this prodigality comes of God or the devil. A cancer, they say, is caused by normal cells running riot and multiplying unreasonably. I have often wondered whether in the jungle's crazy growth, there is not something cancerous. Those great fungi like yellow cheeses, those parasitic orchids with wicked yellow flowers—" He shuddered. "It is all so fierce, so violent, so uncontrollable. If you make a solid concrete floor the plants will burst up through it; and only the other day I heard a sharp crack and discovered that a tree at the back of the bungalow had thrust its branch clean through the window-pane. Yet I had lopped that tree only a few weeks previously. '*Tamen usque recurret!*'"

He went about with a pair of garden clippers, vaguely and ineffectually cutting off the shrubs, boughs and weeds which had ventured farthest into his domain; but he might just as well have tried to lop off the tips of the tentacles of an octopus. We used to watch him, pottering about with his clippers, and Tim christened him "the blind Fury with the abhorréd shears." That was a pleasant quotation, but it didn't fit for there was nothing like that about the Reverend Ezekiel. He was a pitiful, weary, sick and frail old man. The island of Sacré Coeur was no place for him and no place for Capel Sion. I had a fantastic and rather uncomfortable notion that one day the greedy jungle, which already so closely invested him, would surge forward and swallow him up, Capel Sion, bungalow and all. I had that feeling very acutely on the third evening of our stay, when the swift dusk had gathered about us and the great trees at the end of the garden seemed terribly close, seemed to be creeping forward in a solid phalanx. And then suddenly I heard the voodoo drums beating on the hill.

At first I was only vaguely aware of their beat, beat, beat at the back of my consciousness; they were just a different noise from all the previous noises. For that was another oppressive thing about Sacré Coeur: it was never silent, there was never any stillness or hush. All day you were irritated by the ceaseless dry, shrill, telephone-wire noise of the cicadas. Then, toward dusk, that noise merged into the innumerable chirpings of crickets. ("Yes," said the Reverend Ezekiel, "one grows tired of them. 'The grasshopper shall become a burden; and Desire shall fail.'")

The Reverend Ezekiel pottered about with his shears, but he might as well have tried to lop off the tentacles of an octopus.

At dusk the crickets' chirruping merged into the deep-throated mutterings of frogs, sounding like the conversation of disgruntled clubmen. ("'Brekekekex koax koax,'" quoted our host. "Dear me, how many years it is since I read Aristophanes!") Then, when the evening shower was over, the chorus of strange anonymous night-creatures began—whoops, howls, hisses, hums. And now this new noise, deep, loud, and rhythmical, beat its way into our consciousness and became a background to our talk; but the Reverend Ezekiel had no half-remembered tag, no apt quotation, this time. He fell silent; and the noise of the drums rushed in to fill the silence, like air into a vacuum.

EVANS went on hurriedly (they had been talking about Wales), "And Jones Tackleshop married the eldest daugher of Roberts Red Lion, the public house on the corner between Capel Bethesda and Griffiths Shopdraper . . ."

But the Reverend Ezekiel wasn't inclined to indulge in local reminiscences any more. He said shortly, "Yes, indeed," and then suddenly he got up.

"Forgive me," he said, "if I leave you. I always spend Friday evening preparing my sermon for Sunday. It avoids a last-minute rush on Saturday. Good night."

He went out. We heard his old, tired step going down the corridor toward his study. I wondered what sort of a sermon he would write, and how many or how few would listen to it in chapel on Sunday morning. It occurred to me again how very frail the old man was, how precariously Capel Sion stood. The Latin tags, the Greek quotations, the

rusty scholarship, the scraps of assorted wisdom from the Old Testament and Shakespeare, didn't avail him here, provided no answer to the terrible logic of the jungle and the dark questioning of those voodoo drums. And what of the God of the slate-colored valleys, Whose temples were tin bethels four thousand miles away? Did His writ run, I wondered, on Sacré Coeur?

Tim said slowly, "D'you know, I don't like this place! I can't think why, but it gives me the jimjams. I shall be glad when the ship comes and we can get away."

"It was your phony navigation that brought us here," I said.

"Yes. I'll be on the carpet before the captain, I expect. But I shan't mind if only we can get away from here soon. What are those drums?"

"Some voodoo nonsense going on."

"What do they do?"

"Chop off the head of a white cockerel in a magic circle, and dance, and drink bad rum, and work themselves into a sort of hysteria. If they're feeling very naughty, they may even kill a goat. It's all silly nonsense really, Tim. Not wicked, just silly."

Evans said, "In Wales we have foolish superstitions also."

"I saw the witch again today," Tim said. "Oh—I meant to tell you. It was rather odd. She was talking to Man Friday. They seemed great pals. Yet he was so scared of her the other day."

"Perhaps she's discovered that the way to his heart is to throw him pennies," I said. "Though I can't see what she wants with him."

Evans, whose profounder observations always sounded the weightier by reason of their curious inversions, pronounced gravely, "Perhaps a child of her own she does desire and cannot have. Very strange and pitiful such women are. Barren cows they do resemble, that nuzzle another's calf." He paused. "Such a one was there in the town of Pontypridd. . . ."

Evans related everything to Wales.

"Well," said Tim, "you may be right. But I don't like her; and I don't like this island; and I don't like the noise of those drums. Before they turn me into a dancing dervish, I'm going to bed."

So we turned in, and through fitful slumber I heard the drums going all night. I thought I heard singing, too, but perhaps I dreamed that.

When I awoke the sun was bright and hot in the burnished sky, and the cicadas filled the air with a sound like wind blowing through dry bamboos.

We had an arrangement with the ship that we should keep a listening watch on the wireless during certain hours of the day, in case she had any message for us. This was Evans' job, but usually we all went down to the beach with him. I would fiddle about with the engine, and Tim would lie in the sun and play with Man Friday.

But when we strolled down to the airplane next morning, Man Friday didn't come with us. At first this didn't strike us as unusual, for he sometimes joined us later, appearing mysteriously out of the jungle, or, having swum around the promontory, out of the sea. One day he arrived in lordly fashion on a donkey which later, driven mad by flies, kicked a dent in the fuselage of the Walrus. On another occasion he spent the whole of a hot afternoon riding around in small circles on a bicycle with two flat tires. He was an enterprising child.

"He'll probably turn up in a Rolls this time," I said to Tim.

But the day wore on, and there was no sign of Man Friday. We went back to the bungalow for lunch and returned to the beach in the afternoon, because it was cooler there. I was lying drowsily on the sand with Tim, and watching through half-closed eyes a great metallic-blue butterfly, as blue as a piece of the Virgin's snood, sail gracefully along the fringe of the jungle past the scarlet flowers, when Tim said suddenly, "I'm worried about that brat, Johnnie."

Tim loved children: he was a bit of a child himself — impressionistic, mischievous, and playful. The beach still bore traces of the sand-castles, moats, dams and canals, which he and Man Friday had constructed yesterday.

"Perhaps he's sick," I said, "or his parents won't let him come out."

"He hasn't any parents. He lives with an old crippled aunt who doesn't bother about him. His Reverence told me."

"Well, it is a bit funny," I admitted.

After a few minutes Tim got up, saying, "I think I shall go back to the village, and have a look for him."

I STAYED in the shade of the Walrus' wing and dozed. It was more than an hour later when Tim woke me up.

"Johnnie!" he said urgently.

"Yes?"

"I've been all 'round the village and I can't find the brat. I asked everybody I saw but they couldn't tell me anything. Or they wouldn't. They were odd—very polite and non-committal and sort of cagy. They put on blank faces. I thought they knew more than they'd say. Then I met that fat boy who's not quite right in the head. I asked him, and he laughed. Then he said, 'He's gone up the hill with *her*.' I said, 'Who's she?' and he just laughed, and wouldn't say any more."

"It's just some voodoo nonsense going on," I told Tim. "They dance, drink bad rum, and work themselves up into a sort of frenzy."

I sat up, more alarmed than I cared to admit.

"Well, what are you worrying about? Perhaps he likes witches. Perhaps the witch gives him more pennies than we do." But he still looked very unhappy. "What's the *matter*, Tim?" I said.

"I went to see His Reverence," said Tim, "and I didn't like what he told me."

"What did he tell you?"

"I started off by asking about the witch. He looked very uncomfortable and said, 'Yes, yes, poor woman' two or three times. 'Perhaps she is a little strange,' he said, 'but she has had a great sorrow. Recently she lost her husband.' I said, 'I should think he was well out of it,' and old Ezekiel nodded. 'She's a difficult creature and there was—er—domestic trouble.' I asked him to tell me about it. He said, 'There was—er—a girl involved. Even on the island of Sacré Coeur we are not

without our—er—occasional moral lapses.'"

I interrupted. "Tim, what is this extraordinary story all about?"

"Please do listen. I said, 'So he got tired of his witch and ran off with another girl? I can't say I blame him.' And His Reverence nodded and muttered, 'It is not for us to judge, indeed; and the poor man is dead. *Nil nisi bonum.*' After a bit of prompting from me he went on. 'His death was a great puzzle to us,' and I said straight out, 'Did she murder him?' But no, it was nothing like that, he said. The man just died. He didn't have fever, he didn't have T. B., he just wasted; and when he was very ill they sent him away in the schooner to the big hospital but the doctors there couldn't do anything for him. And after he was dead they made an examination and they couldn't find out what he had died of. That's all."

Evans had crawled out of the fuselage and joined us. He said, "Indeed there was a witch at home who got rid of her husband in just the same manner. It is a spell they put upon them. But in that case it was not because of adultery. A different motive she had. That the poor man no longer would make love to her the reason was."

We laughed, but Tim still looked worried.

I said, "All right, Tim. Perhaps she did kill her husband. Perhaps she made a wax image of him and pricked it with pins. And he *thought* she'd put a spell on him, so he died of fright. It's an old story. But there's no reason why she should harm the child."

"Perhaps not. All the same"— Tim frowned— "when I was talking to old Ezekiel I had a feeling that he was worried, too, but he wouldn't admit it even to himself. I think he's a brave and good and obstinate old man who's trying hard to pretend that some of the things which happen on this island don't really happen at all. If he didn't pretend, he'd go mad, because he'd have to admit that his twenty years of hell have been wasted." Tim put his hand on my shoulder and added seriously, "Johnnie, don't you, too, sometimes have that feeling about His Reverence—that he's deliberately shutting his eyes to things, because he's lost his nerve?"

I'd had exactly that feeling, on the previous night, when we listened to the voodoo drums. I had thought, *The old man is pretending he doesn't hear them.* So I knew what Tim meant now. He was an imaginative boy; he was quick to sense things. Already he knew more about the island and its uncomfortable 'atmosphere' than I or Evans did.

I asked, "What do you want to do about it, Tim?"

"I want to find Man Friday. I want you two to come with me, up the hill. I know where the place is. Will you come, Johnnie?"

I nodded, and we got up.

We passed through the village, and we saw the Reverend Ezekiel pottering about with his shears, trying to chop down a very tough vine which had a stranglehold on the front porch. We didn't ask him to come with us; he was too old and sick to climb the steep hill.

We went up by a path over which the trees met, roofing it like an alleyway. It was dusky and still, and had the queer, damp smell of a hothouse. The path was well trodden by many feet.

Then we came out into a small clearing where a fallen tree lay, speckled with huge parasitic flowers.

Tim said, "There are two ways here. We don't want her to get away, so we'll do a pincers movement. I'll take the high road and you'll take the low road; and we'll arrive at the top simultaneously. Infantry Training, Part One."

He seemed excited and nervous. I could sense his anxiety, though I thought he was making too much of the whole business. He climbed on up the steeper of the two tracks; Evans and I followed the other one. It took about twenty minutes to get to the top.

There was a big clearing here, carpeted with long grass which had been trampled down in places. There were two or three bamboo huts, and in the middle of the clearing was Zamballah's altar. We found the cold ashes of a fire. But there was nobody about.

IT WAS very still. The sun was setting and the wind had fallen. The only sound was a ceaseless hissing and rustling in the grass, where snakes or some small creatures moved away from our footsteps. The jungle cast long black shadows across the clearing, and through the trees to the westward we could see the blaze of the sinking sun, like a city afire.

We heard Tim coming up the path.

"Nobody here!" we shouted. Tim came through the long grass toward us.

"I know," he said. "I met her on the way down."

"The witch?"

"Yes. I suppose I was wrong. I suppose I shouldn't have taken any notice of that idiot boy. All the same, I wish we could find the kid."

"He wasn't with her?"

"No. She was by herself. I asked her whether she'd seen the boy, and she said, yes, she'd seen him this morning. He followed her for a bit and then he went off chasing butterflies. She smiled—you know the way she smiles—and it irritated me, so I got tough and said, 'What are you doing up here anyhow?' 'Picking mangoes,' she said. She'd a basket, with a banana-leaf on top. I pulled off the leaf, I don't know why—she couldn't carry

I didn't realize, till Evans exclaimed, what else they had done to the child. Then I noticed the blood and the long tear in his chest.

Man Friday about in a basket. I think I expected to find a white cockerel for the sacrifice, or something."

"Well, what did you find?" I said.

"Mangoes. Just a few squashy mangoes," he replied.

"While we're here," I said, "we might as well have a look 'round. Have you ever seen a voodoo altar, Tim?"

"No. It doesn't look very impressive."

Tim went across to look at the *hounfort*. I thought I'd take a glance at the bamboo huts. I went into the first one, and found nothing but a heap of empty rum bottles which had contained the dangerous, raw local spirit they call *mal cochon* (I don't know why, unless it makes you a "bad pig" if you drink it).

The second hut was tumbledown and disused; and the third had a hole in the back through which the sunset-light filtered and made a rose-red pool upon the floor. By that light I saw the small dark bundle in the corner.

Man Friday looked smaller than ever in death. When I picked him up, he felt as light as one of those little gazelles which flit through the jungle undergrowth. I carried him out, and called Evans and Tim, and we uselessly loosened the thin cord which had strangled him. I didn't realize, till Evans exclaimed, what else they had done. Then I noticed the blood on my hands and saw the long tear in his chest—like a stab-wound, only much neater and tidier and much more purposeful.

Tim cried out, something about "the basket," but still I didn't understand. Tim was very white. "Oh, God!" he said. "Those mangoes." And then the crazy, horrible truth flooded in on me, and I knew the reason for the island's name—Sacred Heart.

"Leave the body where it is, touch nothing, and ring up the police," the law says. But you can't do that on Sacré Coeur. There is no telephone and only one policeman, and he lives at the other side of the island, four miles by the rough jungle track, and he, no doubt, is a pillar of the Law but he also has a wholesome fear of witches.

So we wrapped Man Friday in a coat and carried him down to old Ezekiel's bungalow. It was dark already, and there was no point in chasing the woman; we should merely have lost ourselves. So we sent Ezekiel's servant across the island to fetch the policeman. The man came back three hours later and told us, "Sergeant gone fishing in boat. Come tomorrow." It might have been true; but it was more likely the sergeant had funked walking through the jungle at night. The jungle must be very frightening if you believe in Zamballah.

After dinner we sat uncomfortably and miserably with Ezekiel, not knowing what to say. Slumped in his chair, haggard and silent, he looked more worn-out and broken than ever. But he was still obstinate; he would not tell himself, he dared not tell himself, the dreadful truth.

Once I asked him outright, "Why did the woman take the little chap's heart?"

He shook his head. "Terrible, terrible," he said. "But she is mad. We must always remember she is mad. We can't look into the minds of such people."

"Don't you think," I asked, "that your villagers believe there's some special magic in a heart?"

"No, no! A horrible notion. But inconceivable. Not here. They are poor and sick and ignorant but they are not—not idolaters."

I dropped the subject; it would have been cruel to go on.

Soon afterwards we went to bed, and I lay awake for a long time listening to the unfamiliar silence. Nor wind nor thunder nor rain stirred the breathless air. The frogs made no sound. There were no voodoo drums, no songs, and the villagers stayed indoors. It was the first time I had known stillness on Sacré Coeur; and I did not like it.

NEXT morning, Sunday, we expected the policeman but he didn't come. At ten o'clock Ezekiel rang the cracked, rusty bells which sounded more like a warning of shipwreck than a summons to prayer. Doors began to open, and in silence the villagers trooped to Capel Sion.

I stood watching them, and wondering how much they knew and how much they guessed, when suddenly Tim shouted and pointed across the bay.

"Look! The ship's come for us!"

She stood off shore, hove-to, about three miles out; apparently the navigator mistrusted the shoals. Soon she would lower away the motorboat, to tow the Walrus out to her. There wouldn't be much time to get ready.

So we hurried back into the bungalow and packed our things, and then we went into the chapel to say good-by to our host. To our dismay, the service had already started. The little chapel was full and we had to stand at the back. By craning our necks we could see Ezekiel's weary, ravaged, ascetic face. He was just finishing what I suppose was a short address. I don't know what it was about, but the last sentence made me shudder. "'For he knoweth the secrets of the heart,'" quoted Ezekiel. He paused, and repeated sternly, "'*For he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*'"

There was a small, tense, audible sigh, as if the congregation caught its breath. There was a short silence. Ezekiel stood there, frail and gallant, his head bowed, and I pitied him and feared for him. Then he gave out the number of a hymn, and I was aware again of the hiss of indrawn breath, a tremulous sigh, and of an atmosphere of suppressed excitement which distracted and disturbed me. The hymn started, and I had a chance to whisper a few words to Evans.

"Is it making you homesick? Is it like Capel Sion at home?"

Evans said shortly, "There's something wrong."

I knew that. But it was only during the second verse of the hymn that I understood exactly what it was. I glanced at the people nearest me, and I suddenly became aware that the words they were using were not the words of the hymn. As my ear became adjusted to the singing, I realized that almost the whole congregation was chanting in Creole. Perhaps, I thought at first, they have their own version of that old hymn. But there was a hysterical note in the singing, there was a faint shuffling sound which grew louder as feet began to move and bodies to sway. I glanced again at the woman on my right and saw her fingers twitching, at the man on my left and saw his back and shoulders rippling. I looked at their faces and suddenly I became aware of the truth which old Ezekiel dared not tell himself. I had guessed at it before, but my guess had missed the mark.

I had imagined Capel Sion as threatened by the jungle, and I had seen a symbol in the vine's long tendrils which even now were intruding through the windows and getting a grip on the inside wall. One day, I had thought, the jungle will swallow up Capel Sion. And when I had listened to the voodoo drums, I still thought of the affair in terms of a conflict between Capel Sion and the ancient magic; on the one hand Zamballah, on the other poor Ezekiel. I thought that the drums were a challenge, and feared that they, and the bad local rum, might incite the villagers to burn down the little wooden church, because Zamballah would tolerate no rival on his island.

But now, as I listened to the fervent singing, and heard the rhythm break and change, and the confused shuffling of feet merge into a

regular stamp, stamp, stamp which dreadfully echoed the remembered beat of the drums—now I knew that there was no conflict any longer. The jungle had already entered into Capel Sion, and Zamballah had triumphed. He had no need to destroy the precarious wooden church; for he could be worshiped there as freely as he was worshiped at the *hounfort* on the hill.

There was a hysterical note in their voices and an atmosphere of suppressed excitement.

I touched Evans' arm, and Tim's, and they nodded. We went out into the sunlight. The motorboat was close inshore, heading for the bay beyond the promontory. We hurried down to the beach and as we ran along the path hedged with beautiful and terrible flowers, we could still hear the singing in Capel Sion, where a hundred people chanted a hymn to Zamballah and one frail, brave, foolish old man blindly and obstinately praised God.

GOLIATH

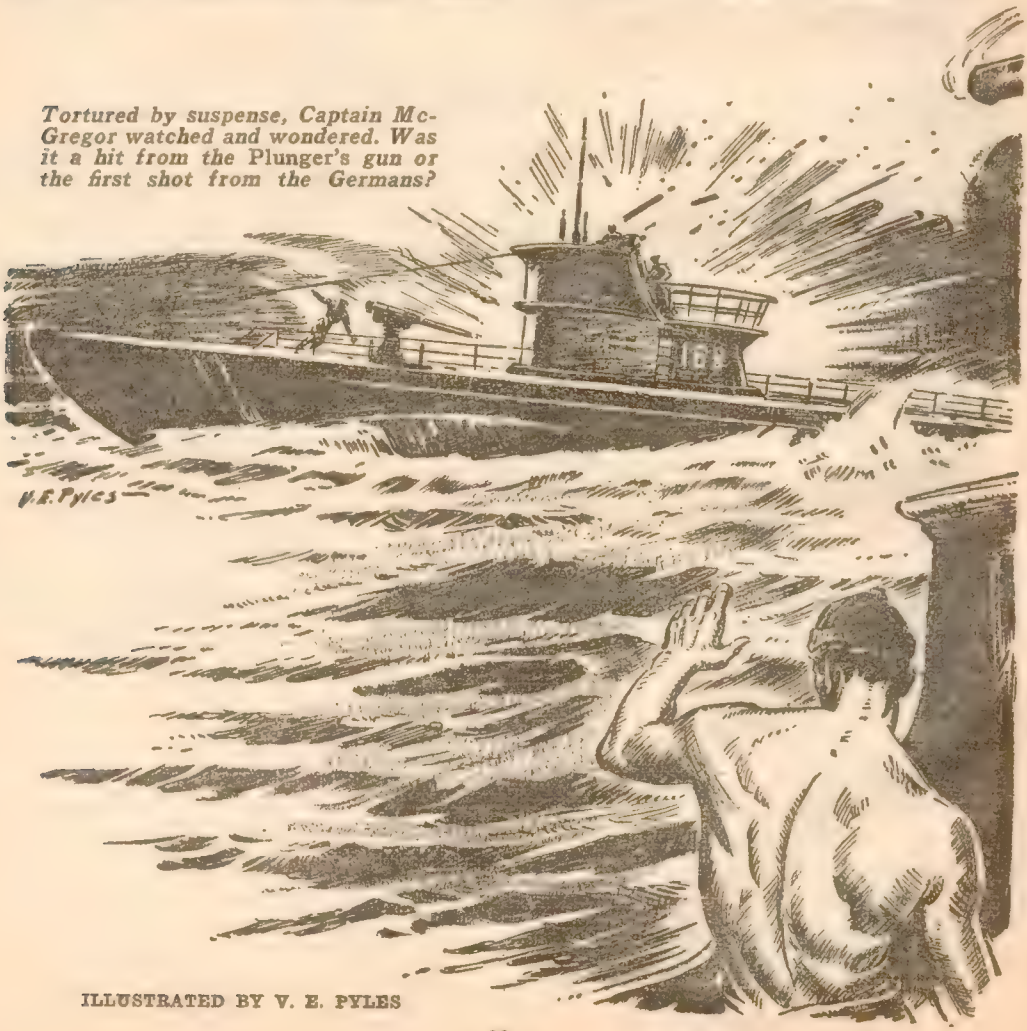
By JOHN FARROW

CAPTAIN McGREGOR, master of the tanker *Plunger*, sat waiting his turn in the office of the Naval Control Service at Curaçao in the Netherlands West Indies. The walls of the office were old and stained and thick, and cut by large windows through which the captain could see long streaks of rusty barbed wire and an occasional Dutch marine, straw-hatted and gaitered, pacing against a very blue sky. It was hot, but not so hot as where he was going, Captain McGregor thought grimly, wiping his broad moist face with a large and violently red silk handkerchief.

The shipping agent, Mijnheer Maal, who occupied the adjoining chair, seemed to sense the captain's thoughts.

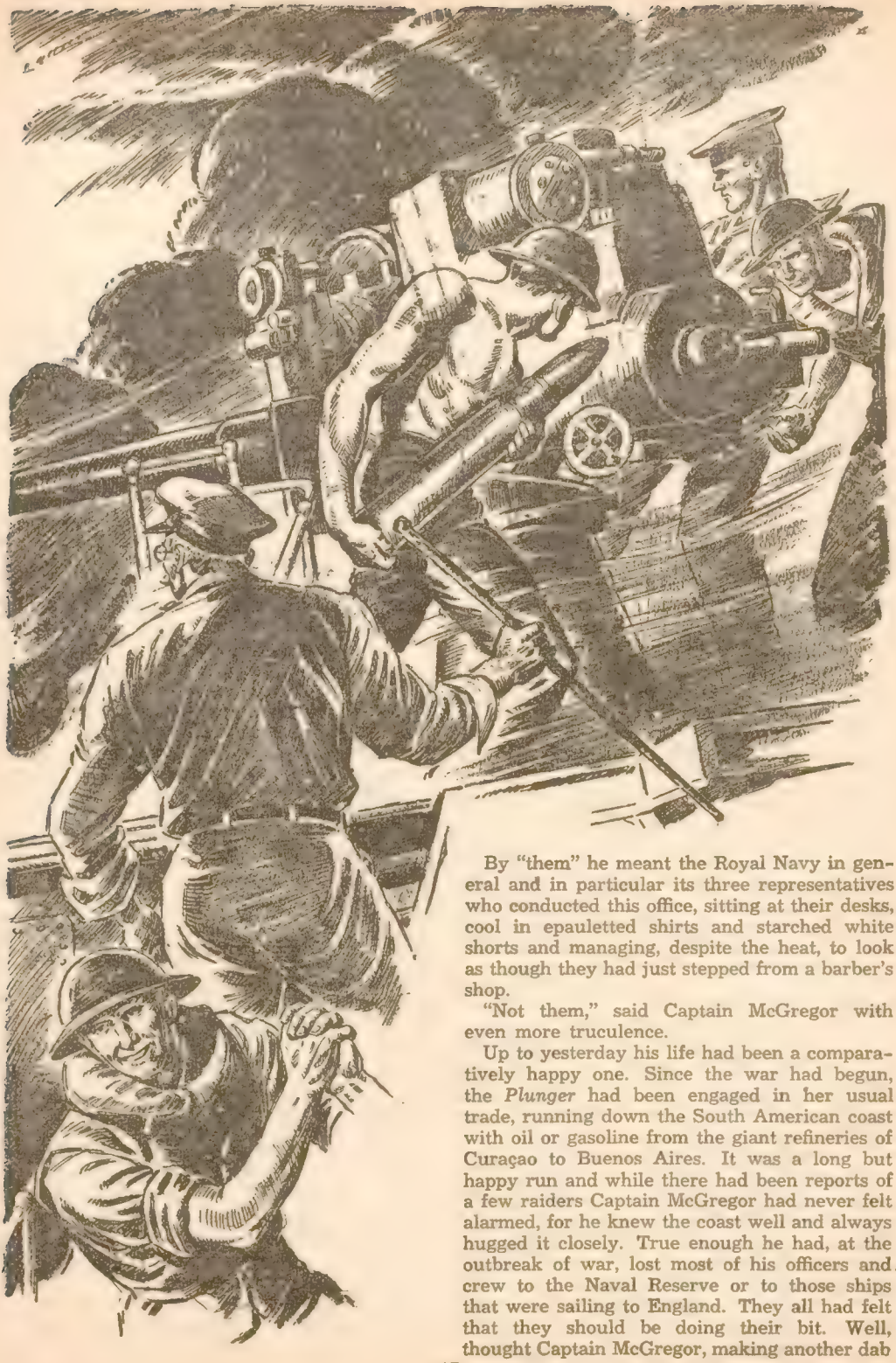
"Perhaps they change their mind," he murmured with an attempt to look cheerful. "Perhaps they send you to Rio or to Halifax instead."

"Not them," muttered the captain sourly.



Tortured by suspense, Captain McGregor watched and wondered. Was it a hit from the Plunger's *gun or the first shot from the Germans?*

ILLUSTRATED BY V. E. PYLES



By "them" he meant the Royal Navy in general and in particular its three representatives who conducted this office, sitting at their desks, cool in epauletted shirts and starched white shorts and managing, despite the heat, to look as though they had just stepped from a barber's shop.

"Not them," said Captain McGregor with even more truculence.

Up to yesterday his life had been a comparatively happy one. Since the war had begun, the *Plunger* had been engaged in her usual trade, running down the South American coast with oil or gasoline from the giant refineries of Curaçao to Buenos Aires. It was a long but happy run and while there had been reports of a few raiders Captain McGregor had never felt alarmed, for he knew the coast well and always hugged it closely. True enough he had, at the outbreak of war, lost most of his officers and crew to the Naval Reserve or to those ships that were sailing to England. They all had felt that they should be doing their bit. Well, thought Captain McGregor, making another dab

at his perspiration, they would certainly be doing their bit now if they had stayed with the ship.

"Damn Hitler, damn the bloody war!" he said to himself as he thought of his present crew, a sorry mixture of nationalities foisted on him by consuls at the various ports; drunks, deserters and malingerers. Captain McGregor rose from the chair and glared through the window as his mind wandered over his injustices. His fifty-six-year-old chief mate was deaf and, until the war had given him another chance, had spent long years as a night watchman for a phosphate company. The Second was a Greek with dubious papers. According to all traditions, he was supposed to be the navigator, but the captain remembered with horror some of the positions that Mr. Papadopoulous had presented after elaborate and long calculations. After once finding the supposed position of his ship to be several hundred miles inland and atop a mountain range, Captain McGregor had henceforth done his own navigation. His scowl deepened as he thought of the engineers and in particular the chief engineer.

A voice suddenly broke in upon his sorrows. "Captain of the *Plunger*, please."

It was the Routing Officer, the lieutenant who had broken the news to him yesterday. Captain McGregor settled his broad and solid bulk in a chair facing the lieutenant's desk and the officer handed him a thick brown envelope, heavily encrusted with sealing-wax. On it was typewritten: *Not to be opened until pilot has been dropped.*

"Your route and instructions, Captain," said the lieutenant, and his voice was slightly apologetic.

CAPTAIN McGREGOR took the envelope, carefully put it in his briefcase, and then got up from his chair with an air of defiance and contempt.

"Perhaps you would like to see your route," suggested the lieutenant.

The two bent over the chart table and Captain McGregor, dividers in hand, marked off the positions through which he must pass with a professional, if angry, eye. It was going to be a long and lonely voyage—*if I ever make it,* he said to himself.

"You will be sailing at sunrise," said the lieutenant.

"Providing I get my crew on board. They will all be drunk."

"That's your responsibility." It was the lieutenant now who was very professional. "The local police are at your disposal."

"And the ammunition has not arrived yet?" asked the captain.

The officer shook his head. "No hope, Captain—not for several weeks yet, I am afraid. Sorry."

The captain gathered his briefcase and walked to the door. "Bloody murder, that's what it is," he muttered.

The lieutenant answered him in an even voice.

"Good luck, Captain," he said. "Good luck to you."

It was a wish that he uttered about ten times a day. He had said it to many captains. And they did not always have good luck but never did they refuse to sail, no matter what their destination or their cargo, nor how gloomy the circumstances. The lieutenant looked at the entry book lying open in front of him. The unfortunate chap who had just left would need a great deal of luck, for his old ship was carrying aviation gasoline to a certain port on the African coast. A port whose approaches were infested with submarines. And there were surface raiders reported to be operating somewhere between Curaçao and that port. The naval officer remembered the look that had come into Captain McGregor's eyes when he had been told of his destination and cargo. Aviation gasoline must be urgently needed in that part of the world for the gentlemen in London to take the old *Plunger* off her regular run.

The lieutenant had done his best for the captain, but he knew his best was poor. The poop of the tanker had been stiffened and a gun of antique vintage mounted, but no ammunition could be provided. An expected shipment had been sunk on the way out and the local supplies were exhausted. The lieutenant contemplated the dangers that confronted the *Plunger* and shook his head gloomily. He thought of her crawling speed and her utter lack of protection and he imagined—for he had served in submarines—how she would appear through the lens of a periscope or through the telescopes of a raider's guns. "Just like shooting a sitting bird," he said softly.

Captain McGregor and Mijnheer Maal walked across the wide square of the Fort courtyard in which was situated the Naval Control Office. As was his habit when the *Plunger* was in port, the agent was taking Captain McGregor to his home for lunch. Ahead of them, in a cool, dark archway, a green-uniformed sentry snapped smartly to attention and rattled his rifle in salute as a sub-lieutenant passed by, but Captain McGregor in his worn and crumpled uniform with its stained shoulder straps received only a casual glance.

"I suppose he would be shot or something if he ever saluted the Merchant Service," said Captain McGregor. "Of course, we are not doing anything in this war. Not a thing."

The agent clucked sympathetically but without much interest, for he, too, like the naval officer, dealt with many masters each and every day. But as they emerged from the cool-

The lady's paint was all awash with tears and Captain McGregor saw a large tear splash from the nose of the Marine into his beer.

ness of the arch, the empty politeness of his face disappeared and he spoke sharply in Dutch to the Negro chauffeur of the car which was waiting for them.

"What's the matter?" asked Captain McGregor.

"My children! They have gone!" the agent exclaimed and continued to speak excitedly to the chauffeur.

The agent's two young daughters had come along in the car for a ride and now they had vanished.

Captain McGregor had become very fond of the blond, pigtailed girls, and they liked him and had great fun laughing at his attempts to speak Dutch or Papiamento, the dialect of the island. Their names were Emma and Elizabeth and they were about twelve and fourteen years old. Elizabeth was the elder and the mischievous one; Emma was the younger and the prettier.

"No need to worry," said the captain. "They've probably just gone to look at the shop windows."

"No," said Mijnheer Maal, and his face and voice grew very austere as he spoke. "My chauffeur say your chief engineer say I give him permission to take my daughters to the Hotel Columbia."

"Hotel Columbia?" said Captain McGregor startled.

He knew that the Hotel Columbia was an institution rarely frequented by the respectable citizens of Curaçao and its clientele consisted of seamen and gay young ladies from Venezuela and Santo Domingo.

"Yes," declared Mijnheer Maal as he pushed his companion into the car. " We go there now quickly, yes?"

CAPTAIN McGREGOR could well understand the reason for the agent's austere and urgent manner and he felt half guilty for the action of his chief engineer. Not that he should be surprised, he told himself, at anything that individual might do. Mr. Tiddlewater was strictly a war emergency, a fantastic creature who had somewhere, somehow, in the distant past acquired a chief engineer's certificate. He was rarely sober in port. He was supposed to be well over seventy years old and had been, according to the gossip of the steward, a grandfather for many years.

The car whirled around the corners and plunged through the narrow streets at a speed that made stolid Captain McGregor grip the side of his seat heavily. The Hindu shops, the kimono-draped bazaars, the souvenir-littered windows flashed by in a blurred panorama, and there were angry shouts in Papiamento, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese. In a few minutes the car had draw up before the Hotel Columbia, from which could be heard the usual rattle and beat of a rhumba band.

The two men dashed through the hotel entrance, which opened on to a patio—and there, sure enough, sitting at a table by the circular dance floor and demurely sipping bright green lemonade were the missing girls. At the same table was Mr. Tiddlewater, in earnest conversation with a broken-nosed sergeant of the Royal Marines to whose arm was clinging a dark-skinned young woman in a red dress. This lady was heavily rouged, but to his surprise Captain McGregor noticed that the paint was all awash with tears and to his further surprise he saw, as they came to the table, a large tear splash from the nose of the Marine

into his beer. A crying jag, reflected Captain McGregor, who had seen all manner and all types of intoxication.

He said coldly, "I'll see you later about this, Mister!"

He knew well that there was little to be derived from an argument with such company and in such a place. Employing the full and chill dignity of a master mariner, he turned and followed Mr. Maal, who was hustling his offspring into the car. The girls were protesting loudly in their own language and trying desperately to make farewell gestures to Mr. Tiddlewater whom it was evident they liked very much. "Goliath," they called back to the chief engineer, who waved his glass of beer in affectionate response.

Captain McGregor's frown grew sterner than ever as the farewell calls were drowned by the noise of the motor and the patio of the Hotel Columbia receded abruptly into the distance. It was evident to him that Mr. Tiddlewater had even told the youngsters his ridiculous nickname.

"The man must be mad," he explained apologetically to Mijnheer Maal. "Absolutely stark, raving mad."

The object of his ire sat staring benignly after the departing car. "Goliath" was indeed a ridiculous name for Mr. Tiddlewater, who was old and decrepit with a drooping paunch and shoulders to match. What remained of his straggling hair was stained by a cheap dye in an effort, presumably, to make him appear younger and thus convince the authorities that he was not too old to go to sea. The hideous purple and dirty-white mixture which was the result could have fooled nobody, but then, the authorities were not too scrupulous these days. Goliath was nearly blind and wore thick-lensed, silver-framed spectacles which were invariably coated with greasy traces of his profession. He seldom walked without a limp or arose from a chair without a groan, for lumbago and rheumatism were among the afflictions from which he suffered. Many a time on ship his helpers had to hoist him over such small objects as steam pipes.

His attire at all times was a disgrace, and at the present moment his costume consisted of a stained and dirty shirt which had no collar, and a pair of dingy near-white trousers which had obviously been made for a larger and better man and which were held untidily above his protruding stomach by an oil-stained belt of frayed sennit. He disdained socks and his swollen, white, mosquito-bitten ankles protruded from a pair of grease-laden, elastic-sided black shoes. In his right hand was a glass and in his left was clutched a large bamboo fan, an article which he insisted on wielding in the tropics at all times and in all places and which was the object of much derision among the younger members of the crew. But despite his depressing appearance, Goliath always managed to exude an air of cheer and good will, and he did so now.

After the car had disappeared he directed his attention to his companions and what he saw was apparently to his satisfaction. The Royal Marine, despite his sergeant's chevrons and broken nose, had buried his head upon the shoulders of his companion and both were weeping openly and unashamedly. They were drunk but they were sad. Very sad.

"You are right," said the sergeant. "Dead right, Goliath."

The small, watery eyes of Goliath held a triumphant expression as he waved his fan at the Chinese waiter.

"Boy," he called, "three more beers!"

IT was near midnight. The lines of the motionless *Plunger* were limp and without strain. A light cluster hung high over the Jacob's ladder which was lashed to the starboard bulwarks amidships. The strong light splashed a bright white brilliance downwards but most of the ship remained in a shadow that jutted darkly against the tropical sky. Under the glare of the cluster the customs officer and the Company's shore watchmen sat on empty cases and yawned and dolefully played their variety of poker with worn and soiled cards. It seemed a peaceful enough scene—but not so, to judge by the expression on the dour face of Captain McGregor, who was standing at his cabin doorway. He was in his pajamas but he was not ready for bed for his chief engineer and three firemen were still missing and the ship was supposed to sail at sunrise. Captain McGregor withdrew into his cabin and, unlocking the bottom drawer of his desk, brought out a bottle of whiskey and carefully poured himself a drink. It was a stiff drink, fully four fingers deep, and Captain McGregor was usually a moderate man, but he felt entitled to such a drink. He was tired and irritable and had had a hard day.

After his lunch with the agent, there had been the mass of paper work which is the curse of every master in wartime. There had been the required visit to the consulate; more paper and more signing and sealing. Then there were the many and complicated details of the final loading and the checking of his stores. Nothing could be expected of or trusted to those mates of his, he reflected. The crew had been told to be on board by six but not a man had shown. The power of the police had been invoked and fortunately the places of amusement ashore were limited. Most of the absentees had been found without trouble. Of course, there had been noise and some disturbance getting them on board, but that was only to be expected of such sweepings of ports as filled his forecastle.

Captain McGregor looked at his bruised knuckles and sighed wistfully as he thought of the drinks which the police had thought to be their just reward after getting his men on board. Captain McGregor was a frugal man; it was only on great occasions and with great personages that he uncorked a bottle, and then the ceremony was always brief.

A clatter and a crash of glass broke the silence on deck. Captain McGregor emerged from his cabin just in time to see two shadowy shapes struggling with an indistinct burden and disappearing into the darkness of the poop. There was little use in pursuing them and besides, there were other activities to engage his attention: A launch was pulling away from the side of the ship and the white glare of the cluster revealed one of the missing firemen, crouched on his knees and seeking to salvage what remained of a case of beer which had crashed and split on the iron deck. Behind him the customs officer and the watchman were grunting and heaving away at a taut line that led to a heavy load over the side, which at this minute revealed itself to be the chief engineer. His head and shoulders appeared over the rail and with rheumatism marking his every movement, he helped the two officials deposit his pudgy body feet-down on the deck. There he stood, gently swaying, looking down at the fireman, who had found a full bottle and was proceeding to empty it.

Mr. Tiddlewater spoke gently. "Remember your shipmates," he said.

Now Captain McGregor had served a long and hard apprenticeship in sail and in the ships in which he had weathered the Horn it was necessary to own a voice which would reach the loftiest yardarm in the wildest of storms. Captain McGregor's voice had never lost that penetrating quality and suddenly, bull-like, his command pierced the night. *"Mister Tiddlewater! Come up here!"*

The four men on the deck below him reacted as if to an electric shock.

"Up here!" repeated Captain McGregor, and way forward in the forecastle men stirred uneasily in their bunks as the voice penetrated even their alcoholic slumbers.

Captain McGregor strode into his cabin and with a wild wink and a leer, Mr. Tiddlewater neatly appropriated the beer bottle from the hand of the fireman, who still seemed stunned. A long gurgle, and the bottle spun in a wide, glistening arc and went over the side. Mr. Tiddlewater, as cheerful as could be, tottered to the ladder which led to the captain's deck and hoisted himself slowly upward.

CAPTAIN McGREGOR received him with a rage and disgust so great that he had to gulp a few times before his voice would function. Mr. Tiddlewater, repulsive to the eye, but nevertheless exuding cordiality, waited respectfully.

"There is no use talking," McGregor said, "or asking questions. You have me where you want me. This ship has to sail at sunrise and she can't sail without a chief engineer on board. That is the law. And there is no other chief engineer on this island. I found that out this afternoon. All right. So I have to take you, but so help me, Mister, if you cross me at sea I'll put you in irons!"

A friendly smirk revealed Mr. Tiddlewater's obviously false teeth. With a note of patriarchal gentleness he said, "Now, sonny—"

Again there came a bull-like roar and again the men in the forecastle stirred uneasily.

"I am 'Captain' to you!"

"All right, no offense meant, Cap," said Mr. Tiddlewater, and, realizing that further conversation was not in order, proceeded to the door. There he turned to make what he considered a salute, and as he did so he saw the whiskey bottle which was still resting on the captain's desk.

"In the old days, Cap, the chief and the Old Man used to have one or two before sailing."

"Get out!"

The pilot was on the bridge and the *Plunger* was proceeding to sea with scant ceremony. Back aft, Mr. Papadopoulous was hoisting the tattered red ensign which was as worn and dingy as the rest of the ship, although, as it floated high to the gaff, it somehow seemed good to the eye. Near Mr. Papadopoulous a few seamen, plainly suffering from the effects of the night before, busied themselves with little enthusiasm. On the forecastle head a similar group surrounded the mate, who dejectedly scanned the passing sights of the crowded channel. Above the steady beat of the engines the voice of Captain McGregor could be heard on the bridge delivering a blast at the helmsman, who felt no better than the rest of his shipmates.

The *Plunger* was sailing on schedule. It was an early hour and there was little activity ashore. The sentries at the Fort, which edged the channel, did not even turn to look at the *Plunger* as she slipped slowly by and dipped her bow to the first ocean swell. She was an ordinary sight: a tanker putting to sea. Rusty-flanked and untidy, she was lower in the water than her legal marks permitted, but this was

A WORD TO THE WISE

Waste paper is still an important war material—it's essential for packing ammunition. So in order to make sure there's enough left over to go 'round for your favorite publication, don't forget to save all waste paper and turn it in for scrap.

wartime and anything went. Silent evidence of war was presented on the poop platform where the barrel of the gun without ammunition pointed abruptly and defiantly at the sky.

The bridge telegraph jangled. Promptly the answering echo came from below and the ship slowed to a lesser speed as the pilot climbed down the Jacob's ladder, jumped to his launch and waved his farewell. Captain McGregor silently returned the salute with uplifted arm and the heavy clang of the telegraph was heard again.

The *Plunger* was now on her own, detached from the shore, ready for whatever the long voyage had to offer.

The days slipped by and the overladen tanker wallowed along, sometimes before a following sea, sometimes bucking into a headwind, but always with her decks awash, laboriously following the complicated and evasive route which the Naval Control had chosen for her. At night, all blacked out and without a glimmer showing, she was but one dark shadow lurching among many shadows. In the daytime the glare of her sun-baked metal hurt the eyes.

Most of the time it was terribly hot, and the blazing heat made the iron decks and housing untouchable to bare feet and hands, but sometimes there was a wind and sometimes the welcome wetness of sudden squalls. It was the routine of the sea—but there was the suspense of war, too.

The ship sailed on. Captain McGregor lost weight perceptibly and his eyes became bloodshot and red-rimmed. He placed small faith in his officers and he spent most of the nights in the lee wing of the bridge—a lonely, silent figure, peering anxiously for that which he hoped he would never see.

One shot would be enough to settle the fate of the *Plunger* and her cargo of aviation gasoline. Just one shot. Captain McGregor could not forget the picture the second mate had drawn of what happened to a gasoline tanker when hit by gunfire or torpedo. In the earlier days of the war, Mr. Papadopoulous had been in a tanker convoy that had been attacked both by a surface raider and by submarines. He had seen what happened to the tankers that had been hit and his dark eyes grew round when he described the scene.

"A big puff and a flare high to the clouds, a thousand feet high—"

"What's the difference if you go up a hundred or a thousand feet?" Captain McGregor had asked him sourly. "If you're going to get it, you're going to get it."

Mr. Papadopoulous had paid no attention to the captain's philosophy. He had been too busy remembering the horror of what he had seen.

"A big puff—and no more ship. Jist a lot of fire on the water—and smoke going way up!"

THERE had been three alarms so far on this voyage—a big one and two ordinary ones. The latter occasions had been when, once during the morning watch and once during the afternoon, smoke had been sighted on the horizon. Evidence of another ship in the vicinity was enough to make everyone tense and silent aboard the *Plunger*. These were lonely waters and any vessel sighted was treated with suspicion and fear. Both times Captain McGregor had turned the *Plunger's* stern to the distant smoke and sent word to the engine room to give all speed possible. Both times the engineers had responded nobly, and with much groaning and creaking and thudding, the *Plunger* had been able to regain her solitary state.

The fifth night out from Curaçao had been squally and wet and dark, and Captain McGregor, face pressed against the wheelhouse window, was thinking he might as well try to get a few hours sleep on the chart-room settee. But suddenly the squall passed, the rain ceased, the moon chose to emerge from a cloud, and in the new visibility Captain McGregor had seen the unmistakable silhouette of a large cruiser bearing down upon the *Plunger* and not more than a mile away.

The warship proved to be English, but Captain McGregor felt that several years had been added to his age during the few minutes it had taken to exchange identification signals. Those few minutes had also shown him how useless the chief mate was with a signal lamp.

But, making allowances for wartime conditions, Captain McGregor admitted to himself that he was agreeably surprised with the performance of his crew. They had turned out much better than he had anticipated.

He was in the chart-room marking off the ship's position. Carefully he measured the distance to the coast. Only three more days to go. He slid the parallel rule over the chart and looked at his route instructions again. His pencil traced a neat little square at which he looked intently. This was the area which the Naval Control people had warned him was the danger area, the favorite hunting ground of the enemy. The neat little *X* that marked the ship's position was just inside the square.

Captain McGregor glanced at the brass clock on the bulkhead. It was five bells, half past six, and night was approaching. From now on, until daybreak, he would stay on the bridge. He left the chart-room, which adjoined the wheelhouse, paused for a moment to look in the binnacle, and after giving an automatic growl to the helmsman, took his accustomed position in the lee wing of the bridge—which on this occasion was on the port side. On the opposite side of the wheelhouse the mate lounged behind the dodger, myopically staring at the horizon.

Captain McGregor made a sweep with his binoculars, then looked hopefully up at the sky, whose clouds were tattered and dark. A sudden puff of wind made the dodger slat noisily.

It was possible there might be squalls or even worse. Captain McGregor fervently hoped a gale would break, for storms kept the subs below the surface.

"Hi, Goliath!"

The hail came from the direction of the poop where a group of the hands off watch were congregating around the gun, enjoying their evening smoke.

Captain McGregor twisted around and saw that his chief engineer was laboriously making his way aft on the long catwalk. Evidently his rheumatism was bothering him badly, for while one hand clutched the catwalk rail, the other wielded a long stick which was almost a crutch. His steps were short and uneven, and sometimes Mr. Tiddlewater would wait for the pitch and roll of the ship to give him impetus. His bent and pudgy figure was about as unnautical as one could ever hope to discover afloat. Yet Captain McGregor grudgingly conceded that the chief engineer, like the rest of the crew, had turned out better than he'd expected on the long voyage. Not that he had seen much of Mr. Tiddlewater, for by unspoken agreement both men had avoided each other's company as much as possible. This was not difficult, for the captain spent most of his time on the bridge, even taking the majority of his meals there, while Mr. Tiddlewater messed with his engineers and spent most of his time below-decks, occupied with his engines and his rheumatism.

BOISTEROUS cries drifted to the bridge as Mr. Tiddlewater reached the gun platform. Captain McGregor did not approve of his chief engineer's total disregard of his dignity as an officer, yet as he watched the cover being unlatched from the gun, common sense told him that the chief's mingling with the hands was of some value. Mr. Tiddlewater, it had been discovered, had had something to do with guns during the Boer War and the *Plunger's* weapon was of that vintage. He seemed to be quite familiar with its workings and occasionally, at times like this, he would coach the hands at gun drill. They were at it now, throwing a dummy projectile into the breech with quite a reasonable skill and speed. Mr. Tiddlewater's voice could be heard giving instruction and advice, peppered with his high cackle of derision. The men were having fun and exercise and the drill might prove valuable on the return trip, providing, of course, that they could collect ammunition at the port which was now only three days away. Captain McGregor's thoughts drifted to the neat little square he had marked on the chart and he remembered Mr. Papadopoulous' description of what a gasoline tanker looked like when hit.

As though to shake away such gloomy thoughts, he turned to look forward and as he turned, his eye caught that sight which he had been waiting and dreading to see. A long line of white foam was furrowing swiftly toward the ship.

"Hard over starboard!"

Even as he shouted he was in the wheelhouse himself, heaving at the spokes of the big wheel. It seemed an eternity before the ship answered her helm and as she swung, Captain McGregor rushed to the outer bridge again, pushing by the mate who was excitedly shouting down the engine-room voice tube.

The torpedo had missed but there would be a second one. How soon? Captain McGregor raised his binoculars. "Steady," he told the helmsman.

"Steady, sir."

"Steady as she goes."

"Steady as she goes, sir."

Through his glasses Captain McGregor watched the periscope grow into a conning tower atop a low, sinister hull as the submarine broke water. Captain McGregor had placed the *Plunger's* stern to the submarine, but even so, he knew that the enemy's speed on the surface was far superior to the tanker's miserable nine knots. Should he give orders to abandon ship now before that fatal second torpedo came? Or perhaps the captain of the sub did not intend to waste another such valuable projectile on the old tanker. Gunfire would be equally effective and far cheaper. Either way was death, and a quick one, to everybody on board the *Plunger*. "A puff and a flare high to the clouds."

Captain McGregor knew that he should give the order to abandon ship, yet somehow he found himself reluctant to give the command. Automatically his eyes turned to the grimy, tattered old flag streaming from the gaff. The old red duster. He felt the great anger and desperation which seizes a man when he finds that he cannot defend himself or his belongings. If he only had ammunition! If he could only do something— A whine and a sharp clatter from the wireless bespoke the fact that Sparks was at his job. Violent clashing and crashing in the bowels of the ship was evidence that the engineers were doing their best. But despite all these noises a great silence seemed to hang over the ship. And it was then that he heard Mr. Tiddlewater's voice.

"Fire!"

A fiery flash and black smoke from aft, the acrid smell of cordite, and the sharp crack which made his ears tingle convinced Captain McGregor that it was the *Plunger's* own gun which had fired. But he had no time to be

astonished. Anxiously he watched to see how accurate the shot had been.

A white finger like a column sprouted on the starboard side of the submarine.

"Fire!"

Another flash, and as the smoke cleared away, a second white column stood up from the ocean. This time it was short of the submarine but on a direct line.

"Fire!"

Again the *Plunger* had missed. The shot had gone over the submarine, but still it was in a direct line.

Mr. Tiddlewater's shrill voice could be heard.

"Down three hundred!"

There was an answering flash on board the submarine. Tortured by suspense, Captain McGregor watched and wondered. Was it a hit from the *Plunger's* gun or was it the first shot from the Germans? Again there came a sharp crack from aft. And this time there was no white column visible, only black smoke and flames pouring from the submarine.

Suddenly the sight of her became dim and obliterated in Captain McGregor's binoculars and he realized that he was soaking wet. A severe rainstorm that hit the ship; the squall that he had so desperately hoped for had arrived. Paying no attention to the wild shouts of joy that were proceeding from the poop, he walked to the wheelhouse and peered in the binnacle.

"Thirty degrees to port, Mister," he told the mate. The submarine might be hit. She might be sinking. But she also might have suffered only minor damages. Captain McGregor felt it was not the time to indulge in curiosity.

THAT night the *Plunger* wallowed sluggishly along at her usual speed. The weather had cleared but Mr. Papadopoulous, who held the watch, felt relaxed and unworried, for riding off the starboard beam was the long, low shadow of the destroyer which had come in answer to the message sent out by Sparks.

In the master's cabin Mr. Tiddlewater, as disreputable and repellent as ever, sat across the polished surface of the mahogany table from Captain McGregor.

"What I want to know," said Captain McGregor, "is where that ammunition came from."

Mr. Tiddlewater grinned. "Well, Cap," he declared, "it's a long story."

He paused and there was a shrewd gleam behind his spectacles. He coughed hoarsely.

"My throat is a bit sore. Have ye any water?"

Captain McGregor looked at him steadily for a moment, then took out his keys and slowly opened the lower drawer of his desk. He took out a bottle of whiskey. There were glasses and water on the desk.

"Say when."

The only response from Mr. Tiddlewater was a contented smile.

His host stopped and poured himself a drink. The two men raised their glasses.

"Cheers!"

"Cheers!"

Captain McGregor sipped his drink with full appreciation of its value, but Mr. Tiddlewater's glass was empty after two hearty swallows.

"Proceed with your explanation, Mister."

"Remember, Cap, the day we sailed? At the Hotel Columbia—the two kids?"

"What's that got to do with the ammunition?"

"Everything. That Marine, Kelly was his name, was a gunner aboard a troopship which fueled near us. Plenty of ammunition aboard her and lots more where she was going. I asked myself, what was a few cases of ammunition to her? I asked Kelly. And I asked Conchita, too. That was the Venezuelan girl with Kelly. I suggested that Kelly could use that much ammunition in target practice and never miss it."

Captain McGregor stirred impatiently. "But what did the youngsters have to do with it?"

"I told him"—again Mr. Tiddlewater's voice broke into a shrill cackle—"I told him they were your children."

"You—*what*?"

"I told him they were your kids. You know how the Irish are about kids. And the Spanish, too. Well, Cap, I told him you had eight children. Four boys and four girls. And that your wife had passed away and they would all be orphans unless we had the ammunition.

"And so," continued Tiddlewater blandly, "I produced the gals as evidence. Orphans in the making, as it were."

The captain poured two drinks, and this time he did not ask "When?" but spoke cautiously. "A nightcap, Mr. Tiddlewater, a nightcap."

Mr. Tiddlewater emptied his glass with relish, then waddled to the door.

"Thanks, Cap. I wish ye pleasant dreams."

"One more question, Mr. Tiddlewater. How did you get the stuff off the trooper and on board here—past the police and customs?"

"Getting it off the trooper was easy. The quartermaster was a friend of Kelly's, and he knew about your"—Mr. Tiddlewater cackled at the memory—"about your family, Cap. Getting it on board was another matter. So I bought a couple of cases of beer and mixed the cases. What harm was there in the chief engineer bringing on board a few dozen beer?"

Mr. Tiddlewater's spectacles flashed as he blinked at the bottle on the desk.

Captain McGregor's face wore the expression of a man faced with a momentous decision. Then recklessly he plunged into his drawer and brought forth a bottle. A full bottle, clean and new and wrapped in soft paper.

"Take this bottle. It will be good for your rheumatism, *Goliath.*"

EVERYTHING BUT THE LANGUAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY PETER KUHLHOFF

By F. R. BUCKLEY

IT IS cold and damp in England in winter, and also usually in the spring, summer and autumn; so the authorities have issued to girls of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force an item of underwear in heavy dark-blue denim. I do not know how the men of the RAF found out about these, but they did, and christened them "passion-killers." And, to use the most common expression in British slang, they took a poor view.

Not a poor view of the bl—the underwear; just a poor view, period. Only non-Britishers add an objective phrase. I have often thought that the surest way to catch spies would be to make them try to talk the slang of whatever country they might be invading. It's worked heretofore.

Once during the last war, a German wearing an Australian uniform entered British trenches by night and said he had been called to the command post from a unit further up the line.

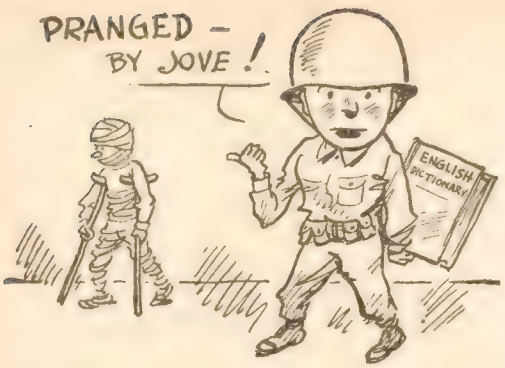
"Are you fair dinkum?" asked one of the Aussies—meaning "Are you the real thing?"

"Yes," said the German, "I'm Major Fair Dinkum."

Within a few hours, he was Major Fair Dead.

Well—to get off the grim—I went to England last year and found a whole language, new since 1939; and having spent the meantime in America, probably took more notice of it than I should have had I heard it grow up. As the old saw goes, America and Britain have much in common—everything but the language. American slang is usually founded on exaggeration or wild allusion—like the term "sarong stuff" applied by Pacific men to news broadcasts which cover no more than they have to.

British slang, on the other hand, is deprecatory, apparently contemning what is most val-



ued. For instance, the armorer and the instrument-adjuster, on whom pilots rely for their lives, are respectively called the gun-buster and the clock-basher. A mechanic, because of his supposed preoccupation with sprockets and cogs, is called a sprog—which word also signifies one's best friend; meshed gears being the idea in this case, presumably. A harmless, necessary and perhaps highly esteemed rigger has "mortis" tacked on to his title.

The word "type" is a standby, invariable for man or woman under discussion. There are bad types (meaning merely convivial); gen types, full of information, and dim and clueless types who are empty of it; brown types from the army and types who, without any adjective, are commissioned officers or "gussies." If these last are in the Navy they are also blokes; a two-and-a-half bloke is a lieutenant-commander—two wide rings and one narrow. A specialist is also likely to be called a wallah, from the Hindustani for peddler; thus a gaswallah is a man of the Chemical Warfare Service.

Back to the WAAF before I forget that a lady who is friendly is a bint—an originally-rude Arabic word now considered flattering—and one who is stand-offish is toffee-nosed or huffy. An N.C.O. of this service is unkindly called a Midwaaf.

AN unfriendly WAAF, like many other military phenomena, may bind one rigid and brass or even brown one off—bore one stiff, that is, with more or less acute depression. One can also be browned off by a superior officer, meaning that he will bawl one out or tear one off a strip. Between brassed off and browned off is the state of being cheesed—one must be exact about these things, or one may convey a meaning not intended. For instance, if a man says of a job, "There's no future in it," he means that it bores him; if he says it offers no future *at all*, he sincerely expects to be killed. One might think this would be implied rather by the assurance that a situation is "very grave"; actually this means only that one is broke.

The gravest situation of all—that of being dead—is brightly indicated by the term "gone for a Burton," which implies that the subject has just stepped around the corner for a beer. Prior to doing so, he may have pranged—meaning crashed—his bus to the extent of wrapping it up, thus writing it and himself off (the books of the station). Or he may have stopped a packet (of enemy ammunition), or have tangled with the law of gravitation so that "Newton got him." In any case, the idea is that he's been; he's had it. It is frequently said that one's "had" things in England. This means that something is not available and the phrase is applied to everything from promotions through candy and cigarettes to a train that one has missed. Never before, one might say, has a population had so much and got so little.

A whole body of otherwise inexplicable slang is founded on the old cockney rhyming language, in which one's arm was a farm, a hand the St. Martin's-le-Grand, the stairs the apples-and-pears, one's head a loaf of bread and a hat a tit-for-tat. By derivation this leads to such remarks as "He put on his titfa and went for a piece of chalk on his Jack"—that is, he put his hat on his head and went for a walk on his own (his Jack Malone). Titfas, by the way, are not to be confused with tits, which are buttons of all kinds, from the firing control on the joy-stick to the bell-button one pushes for drinks in the officers' mess. The gun-tit, along with all other gadgets except the instrument board clocks, is known as the taps, corresponding to American faucets.

Speaking of taps, there is a graphic query, "Why should I carry the can?" or, "Why should I take the bottles back?"—the idea being that of clearing up after a party. "Who sorted me out for this?" is another reaction to a duff job (duff meaning dud, the opposite of snorter or wizard). Another relevant query is "What's this in aid of?" applied also to an Ally in some unknown and probably fancy uniform. The implication here is that he's in masquerade costume, raising funds for charity.

It's a very rich language; there's room for a dictionary of it and after the war there probably will be one. Meanwhile, just as the terms occur to me: To beetle is to go somewhere; possibly to "the local," meaning the nearest pub. A devil-dodger or God-botherer is either a chaplain or a devout member of the congregation. "Then the balloon went up" means that the trouble began then. "Gooly," a rude term of nursery origin, appears in the phrase "to drop a gooly," which is the same as "drop a brick" but wetter, and also in the noun "gooly chit"—the Arabic printed paper promising Arabs rewards for salvaging crashed aviators instead of cutting their throats. The aviator is presumed to be overcome by fear. Chit means almost any piece of written paper except too-useless official documents which, though not issued in rolls or perforated, are nevertheless known as "bumph."

One of these documents—the fizzer—can of course land you in jankers; it is the charge sheet which can lead, via "caps off," the summary court, "over the wall" to the mush, clink, chokey, or guardroom, possibly even to the glass-house, or military prison.

A grocer is a supply officer, but groceries (delivered) turn out to be bombs. An engineer officer, no matter how elevated, is a plumber; but a spout being the barrel of a bundook or rifle, is out of his department. A commander or commodore is a commode; a squadron leader is a squadron bleeder; a brolly (from umbrella) hop is a parachute jump. A drill has nothing to do with gravel-bashing, or evolutions on the square (parade ground) but indicates the correct method of dealing with a situation. ("That's the drill.")

More about women and wine? Well, an At is a member of the (Women's) Auxiliary Territorial Service, and an "adjutant's At" is a blond job. A queen, an oppo (opposite number), a piece of homework or knitting, one's dish of milk, are all girl-friends. Courting a cat is going out with one; so is square-pushing, which implies honorable intentions. A male type not afflicted with these last is called a Naafi Romeo (Naafi corresponding to USO), a poodle-faker, a canteen cowboy or, in extreme cases, a garter-snake.

The synonyms for intoxication are fewer than one might expect, possibly because alcohol in wartime England is hard to find and mighty few to the pint. To jug is to drink it—probably in the form of weak beer; to be shot, shot up or shot to ribbons are the commonest terms for possible effects. On the other hand, to be shot down or shot down in flames means to be severely reprimanded by some officer who may be upset to the point of having kittens. As I said earlier, one had better know one's slang or stick to English. To say, for instance, that after one had kicked the colonel's dog he shot one to ribbons would mean that he made the speaker bountifully drunk, not a usual course for colonels in the circumstances.

Well, one could flog on about it all for pages. The subject is so large that, having mentioned it in *Camp-Fire*, I tried to play a flanker, but the Editor wouldn't wear it—I mean I tried to get out writing the article, but he briefed it in a way that shook me to the roots. Seemingly readers cried for it. So, sprogs, if you've been bound by this line-shooting, it's your own fault.

Or, as the RAF would say, "You bought it."

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ROGER SUDDEN

By
THOMAS
H.
RADDALL

THE STORY THUS FAR:

ROGER SUDDEN, handsome young Jacobite, returns from the Continent to his family seat, Suddenholt, in Kent, on the night of January thirtieth, 1749, when the local Jacobite club is meeting there. He left Oxford to follow Prince Charlie into exile in '45 and is now returning to England to rally Jacobite support for him. He finds the estate in sad repair and his older brother CHARLES, who inherited his father's taste for and debts from drinking, living off money borrowed from his feeble-minded AUNT PENNY. Charles gives him a cold welcome and assures him that none of the Jacobites in England will risk their lives for Prince Charlie; they merely meet for sentimental reasons and drink the health of "the king over the water." Disgusted and disillusioned, Roger leaves Suddenholt, promising his Aunt Penny that he will go to the colonies and bring back enough money to restore Suddenholt to its former glory.

On the road to London, penniless and undecided as to his destination, he is held up by TOM FULLER, a sailor turned highwayman. Managing to disarm the would-be holdup man, he decides to help him rob the Gravesend tide-coach to get some money. The sole occupants of the coach turn out to be two foppish British officers, COLONEL BELCHER and MAJOR WOLFE, who had fought Prince Charlie's men at Culloden. Delighted to find his victims are also his political enemies, Roger taunts them as he robs them, letting them know that he is a Jacobite but not revealing his name.

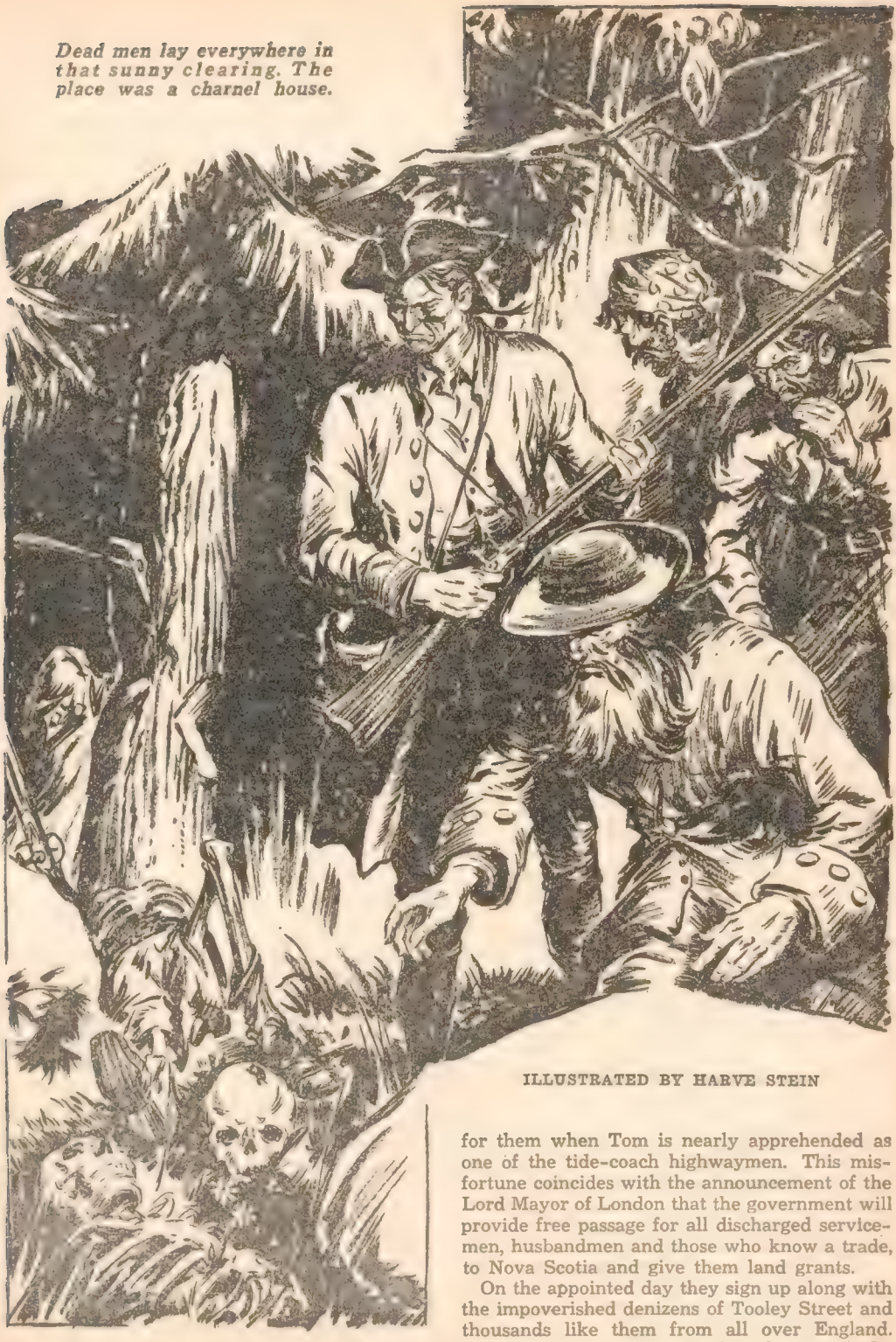
Reaching London, Tom Fuller guides Roger to Tooley Street in the Southwark slums, where they decide to hide out until they can find a boat leaving for one of the colonies—which one, Roger hasn't yet decided, but Tom has persuaded him to take him along wherever he goes.

They find accommodations in the house of ISAAC TROPE and his housekeeper, LUMLEY, and get to know the other inhabitants: SALLY MADIGAN, the pretty prostitute whose former room they occupy, and whose advances Roger repulses; BOB, the hackney-coachman, and his family; NED and JACK, the chairmen; LITTLE BOB, the pickpocket; MAGGS, the chimney-sweep, and his family; VACE, the journeyman-barber; KILLICK, the boatman, and his wife, an oysterwoman.

Every day Roger and Tom visit Wapping, where sailors of the seven seas congregate. To Roger, these men seen only thirsty brutes trying—never very successfully—to suck an inadequate living from the world. In the end, they are always squeezed dry by the merchants and shipowners, Roger notes, and he decides that it is more profitable to squeeze than to suck.

Roger's and Tom's decision to leave Tooley Street and their choice of destination is made

Dead men lay everywhere in that sunny clearing. The place was a charnel house.



ILLUSTRATED BY HARVE STEIN

for them when Tom is nearly apprehended as one of the tide-coach highwaymen. This misfortune coincides with the announcement of the Lord Mayor of London that the government will provide free passage for all discharged servicemen, husbandmen and those who know a trade, to Nova Scotia and give them land grants.

On the appointed day they sign up along with the impoverished denizens of Tooley Street and thousands like them from all over England. Roger and Tom are assigned to the *Fair Lady*,

a snow, or small brig, whose captain is old JOB HUXLEY. On board they meet the only two paying passengers, CAPTAIN JOHN FOY and his wife, MARY FOY. Foy explains to Roger that the real purpose of this expedition is to build an English fort at Halifax strong enough to attack the French at Louisburg, the fort once captured by the British and recently returned when peace was signed. After much delay while supplies are loaded and a captain-general is chosen, the fleet finally sets sail.

PART II

IT WAS pleasant enough bowling along the Kent coast under the westerly wind, but when the *Fair Lady* rounded North Foreland towards evening and fetched the wind ahead there was a sorry change, with short tacks and hard labor at the braces, all hands scrambling continually to the roar of Old Hux and the shrill voice of Mr. Cheeny while the snow crept slowly into the Downs. There she anchored in the last of the light. She had outpaced the transports, which came in during the night was a great flogging of canvas, splashing of anchors and bellowing of orders.

Job Huxley went off in his gig towards the twinkling lights of Deal. Roger stood at the main chains watching the boat lantern dance away. The deck was deserted except for himself and a seaman at anchor watch beside the fore bitts.

Mrs. Foy's voice startled him. "A penny for your thoughts, Mr. Sudden."

She had come like a ghost in her silken shoes, and the pale stuff of her gown made a ghostly blur in the dark. "But wait," she added quickly. "I wager sixpence it's a woman!"

"You win and you lose, ma'am. I was thinking of 'The Fair Quaker of Deal'."

She stepped to the rail beside him. "The play? I saw it. Mr. Foy thought it shocking to take me to the theater, but I'm headstrong and why should men have all the pleasure?"

"Why, indeed?" he murmured politely.

"I think I've seen Garrick in all his parts. Did you know he'd given up that pretty creature Woffington for a demure little dancer from Vienna? Mam'selle Violette. They say he's to marry her. Much better for him, too. A charming man. Did you see his 'Miss in Her 'Teens'?"

"I've not been in England for a long time, Mrs. Foy."

"May I ask where you've been?"

"It would take too long to tell you."

She laughed. "You don't want to talk about yourself. That's odd, in a man!"

"Suppose," he said boldly, "you tell me something of yourself."

"There's nothing to tell, Mr. Sudden."

He was tempted to ask her why she had married a man old enough to be her grandfather. Instead he said, "Perhaps you'll tell me why you wear white ribbons in your hats."

"How observant you are, sir!"

"In London," he suggested, "the white ribbon marks a lady of Jacobite tendencies. Is yours a symptom of the heart?"

"I don't wear my heart upon my sleeve, not even for such witty daws as you, Mr. Sudden."

"And what about the ribbon on your hat?" he insisted.

"Come, sir! There's nothing on my head at this moment but my hair, which is red—quite unpolitical and most unfashionable. Please talk to me. This is going to be a long voyage and I must have someone to converse with besides Mr. Foy and my maid was Captain Huxley."

The night over the Downs was full of stars and she had her face turned up to them, a pale oval in the dark. Experience tempted him. These were familiar cues; the woman's adroitly chosen time and place, the confession of loneliness, the stepping close, the mingled scents of perfume and soft flesh, the face upturned, the little waiting silence. There was even the spice of a husband somewhere in the offing. She was not beautiful, but she had a figure made for caresses and there would be fire in her if the hair meant anything. He slipped an easy arm about her waist and found it pliant in spite of her stays and warm under his palm. A promising waist, an exciting waist. In a moment now she would sway a little toward him and turn her head in unconvincing protest or perhaps only to laugh softly in assent.

He felt her waist go taut, but the blow came unexpectedly for all that. The back of her doubled left fist flung up with force. It caught him full in the mouth and he tasted the salt of a cut lip. He released her waist at once. He was furious.

She said quietly, "I've hurt you. I'm sorry."

"No, Liar! She had bruised his mouth and his self-esteem in a stroke.

"I don't like to be touched—by anyone."

"So I see."

SHE moved a matter of inches, but the gulf was deep. "Please don't be angry. I'm not. Can't we talk about something? The weather? How long must we wait here for a fair wind?"

"That's hard to say," he replied coldly, and then with an assumed lightness, "When you live in Kent the east wind seems to blow half the time; sailors waiting in the Downs for London say all the time, and those outward bound say none of the time. It's all in where you want to go or what you want to do."

"And what do you want to do? In America, I mean?"

"I told you once. To make my fortune."

"Many men have gone to America for a fortune and stayed for lack of it."

"Not I, ma'am. At the worst I can always put on a pair of tarry breeks and work a passage home."

"Where did you learn to say 'breeks'?"

"In my travels."

"You've traveled in Scotland, then. Tell me about Scotland."

His tongue went into his cheek. Then, wickedly, "A wild country, most of it too near the sky for comfort—a little too close to the weather. The men are wild like their country and rough as their weather, but there's a strain of music in them that deserves a better instrument than the bagpipe. A Highlander will kill you at the slightest insult and compose a poem over your corpse that would make the very mountains weep. The women . . ."

"Ah!"

"The women are strong and beautifully made, but there's more strength than beauty in their faces and more beauty than strength in their souls. They have the morals of the deer on the hillside. They don't wash as often as our London dames, but then, town dirt is so much more dirty. . ."

"You're speaking of the Highlands"—her voice was thin-edged like the ice of a night's frost on a loch in the hills—"and thinking of some herdsman's woman in a bothy amongst the glens. Have you never been in Edinburgh?"

"The women of Edinburgh are dirtier than the others and not so pleasant in their manner."

"You have a low opinion of Scottish women."

"On the contrary, I think them the finest in Europe."

"Do you speak from experience?" tartly.

"I do."

"And now you propose to sample the women of America?"

What scorn she put into those words! He answered deliberately, "I've put women behind me, along with other things that have no more importance."

A silence. Then, lightly, "And what do you think of me, Mr. Sudden—from your experience?"

"You are a Highlandwoman by birth but you've spent much time on the continent, no doubt following your husband's dragoons in the late campaign—"

"What makes you think that?"

"My dear Mrs. Foy, I've lived the past three years on the continent and met a number of people who spoke English fluently but with a trace of Scots or Irish, a sort of Gaelic lilt that is especially charming in a woman. Well, to go on . . . Your husband seems a gentleman of means, yet he has no official standing in the expedition or you and he would have sailed with the captain-general. So he must be interested in some commercial venture in the colony. I take it that you've no children or you'd have them with you, for you have the air of a woman who has burned her boats and sees nothing but the future."

Again silence. Then she said, "Mr. Sudden, there's a touch of wizardry about you. A dangerous gift."

She began to move away and he said mockingly, "Are you afraid of it?"

She uttered a sound, a little cluck of annoyance, and said quickly, "I'm afraid of nothing about you, Mr. Sudden. Good night."

Roger felt pleased with himself, as if he had scored some kind of victory over that cool green-eyed young woman, but later when he climbed into his hammock and lay there going over their conversation, he knew what a fool he'd been. He had learned practically nothing about her. That did not matter very much. But in one way or another, he had told her practically everything about himself. That was serious.

THE wind had not veered enough by morning to enable the transports to move but Old Hux was anxious to show them what his nimble little snow could do. He came off Deal Beach in the first light, with a red eye after the night's affairs but in surprising good humor, and at once set about getting up anchor and making sail down the Channel. It was a stiff business of long and short tacks, with incessant scrambling to halyards, braces, tacks and sheets. A little sulkily, but putting a good face on it, Roger pulled and hauled with Tom Fuller in the larboard watch. Clever young Mrs. Foy sat with her husband on a bench against the cabin skylight and Roger seemed to feel the play of the gold-flecked green eyes in all his movements. She was enjoying his awkwardness, no doubt, as she would have enjoyed a clown at Covent Garden. Whenever he thought of last evening's conversation, he writhed. Thus occupied in mind and body, he scarcely noticed the land slipping past until, hanging grimly to the main topsail yard and striving with one hand to help reef the lively canvas, he saw Tom Fuller's jerking thumb and looked beyond the struggling men on the yard to a low shingle point off the starboard quarter.

"Dungeness! There's the last of old Kent!"

Aye, there it was, already no more than a shimmer in the haze. He thought piously, God send a good return!

On the following evening, Old Hux dropped anchor amongst the idle warships at Spithead and went away with a bundle of papers in his gig towards the smudge of Portsmouth. Roger wakened in the night and heard a drumming of rain on the deck overhead and the harping of a rising wind in the rigging. Then the heavy clatter of restless Mr. Cheeny's sea-boots and his voice in the forecastle, calling a few hands to "freshen the nip."

CAPTAIN FOY

"What's the matter?" Roger asked of Tom in the next hammock.

"Hear the rain? Wind's come east, hard. She's swingin' to her anchors and the mate wants to ease the cables a bit. The transports'll be up with us tomorrow night. A great wind for the outward bound."

In the forenoon Job Huxley came off in the gig, with a tarpaulin over his head against the downpour. His boat's crew looked like drowned rats. He ordered the gig stowed for sea, looked at the cables, announced that some important government stores would come off in lighters as soon as the weather cleared, that a sloop would come out of Portsmouth with fresh meat for the cabin table and a quantity of sea stores, that the transports would be up by night, and that he was to be called as soon as any of these things came to pass. With that he dove into his cabin, bellowing for the steward, and did not reappear until dusk, when the watch saw the first of the transports looming through the rain. The others followed in slow file like a herd of cows coming in from the pastures at nightfall, and there was a good deal of backing and filling in search of anchorage, to the accompaniment of profane advice by speaking trumpet from the men-o'-war in the roads. Old Hux added some advice of his own to the *Wilmington*, which blundered too close to the *Fair Lady*. He did not quit the deck until all were settled.

Rain was still falling next morning, although the wind had slackened a little. Mrs. Foy came on deck wrapped in a cloak and holding an umbrella over her head. Her husband appeared in a double-caped boat cloak and a common tarpaulin hat, gave a nod to Tom and Roger and commenced walking the poop with his wife.

Before long the rain ceased altogether and Old Hux came from his cabin and peered towards Portsmouth where, out of the light rain-mist on the face of the waters, there appeared presently the brown sails of a pair of lighters. They came slowly and uncertainly in the wet, fluky wind off the channel and Old Hux tramped impatiently up and down. Alongside, their shallow bowels yielded mysterious machines in wooden crates, followed by smaller boxes and cases, all marked with the broad arrow of His Majesty.

It was late afternoon when all was stowed aboard.

Roger, in the hold, read the careful directions in black paint upon the latest shipment, "Gifts for Indians," "French Bibles," "Powder—keep dry," and so on, but the crated machines remained a mystery until he clambered on deck with the others and found Old Hux loudly perusing his orders and a copy of the bill of lading by the hatch.

"Umph! 'You are to make all speed to overtake or join the Captain-General upon the coast of Nova Scotia'—Zounds! Do they expect a bit of a snow to catch a sloop-o'-war?—'since your cargo must answer his immediate needs'—Needs, ecod! Beads, Bibles, brandy, hatchets, blankets, tinderboxes, gunpowder, fire-engines—why, damme, barrin' the blankets that's all hell needs! What are ye grinnin' at, ye lubbers? Mr. Cheeny! Get the anchors up and make sail!"

The Channel and the sky over it were one leaden gray, the sky weeping once more, the sea tossing in uneasy lumps, the land a gloomy mass behind the rain. A melancholy scene for a departure. It seemed to affect the people in the transports staring in silence over the rails as the *Fair Lady* went past. Below the transports lay de-commissioned men-o'-war, one after another, with sails unbent and topmasts and upper yards struck, with no more than an anchor watch aboard, as if England had done with her wars for ever.

Something disturbing about that. What? Roger wondered. The presence of France just over there to larboard? For years he had looked upon France as the faithful ally of his rightful king and all who fought for him. That notion had been shattered when France came to terms with England and thrust Prince Charlie from her bosom. Now he sensed something intensely selfish and malignant looming along the south side of the Channel. The French had been playing a deep game and the cast-off Stuart cause was only part of it; the rest would

go on and on. To what end? He told himself that he did not care and looked toward the west.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NEW WORLD

THE land was a cloud at first, long and blue across the west, and then a low and ragged parapet traced in the flame of a fine sunset. Old Hux stood on for a time into the after-glow. Dusk had swallowed the east and was striding toward the ship on seven-league boots. He spread his chart against the cabin skylight, and Roger, at the wheel, had a long look at it. Nova Scotia leaned into the Atlantic, a narrow irregular country like Britain itself; but the chart had a vague look, there were long sections of coast-line sketched uncertainly—"by some fool in a fog," Old Hux swore. His sailing directions and the sailing directions for the whole fleet, for that matter, had been airy, to say the least. They were to steer for the coast of Nova Scotia, and about halfway up its length they would find a great harbor which the savages called Chebucto. West of the entrance, the shoreline was white, and the shore to the east was red. And that was all.

Job Huxley stared at the long, low wall against the twilight. "Struck it fair, damme! The whole stretch of it under my forefoot . . . but where? And which way's this Chebucto?" He made an abrupt decision, bellowing, "Ready about!"

The men sprang to, and later as the snow hauled her wind he grumbled in a great voice, "A fair wind and a good landfall. Bad luck to turn your back on it . . . never did this afore in me life! Passengers to consider . . . night comin' on . . . strange coast . . . no pilot . . . chart drawn by guess and by God . . . Um!"

He fortified his patience with gin and trod the poop most of the night, muttering piously for a continuance of the westerly weather. One breath from the east would smother him in that white bank fog again, and he had groped for a week in the stuff already, at the end of the long westerly voyage.

The *Fair Lady* stood off and on through the night. In the morning the wind had fallen light, and it began to baffle, with puffs of moist air from the southeast. Huxley made all sail for the coast, as if pursued by demons. By noon they were close in. It was a low green mass with a gray tread of foreshore with no large hills, nothing remarkable that could be tied to that worthless chart. It trended northeast and southwest. In the end, savagely, Old Hux tossed a shilling. "Heads, east! Tails, west!" It fell in his big paw head up, and east he went.

MADAME FOY

He spent most of the day in the fore topmast crosstrees with a spyglass, bellowing his orders to the deck, and late in the afternoon he hailed Mr. Cheeny in sudden excitement. "A sail, there! A sloop or shallop o' some sort! Standin' in to the coast! After him! There's a pilot for us!"

The whole crew was on deck, and the passengers, too, straining their eyes to pick up the chase. The wind was strong at southeast now and dead aft as the *Fair Lady* swept toward the land, a cluster of irregular blue humps whose bases slowly joined as they approached. On its slim white wings, the strange sloop fled before them like a gull. And now, to the east of the humps, appeared a low and featureless shore. But there was a narrow gap between, as if some sort of river flowed out of the forest there. The southeast sky was gray, a high canopy of cloud that hung in curious twists and folds like an enormous bed-tester, wrinkled, soiled, and likely to collapse at any moment—and moving toward the ship at a great rate. Already there was a haze across the sun, and a wide dark ring appeared about it as the haze thickened and the weird, convoluted clouds moved up the sky. No one in the *Fair Lady* had ever seen such a sky but its meaning was plain to them all. A storm—and a lee shore. Old Hux held on doggedly.

Now and again there was a brief break in the overcast. In one of these moments the

sun put a pale finger on the steep headland to the west and another on that low shore to the east.

"Look!" Mr. Cheeny cried.

The shore to the east had a reddish cast, a look of red clay banks. But the foot of the headland to the west shone gray-white in the sunshine.

"Chebucto!" shouted Old Hux. "Just"—with an almost audible swallowing of his own astonishment—"just where I figgered I was!"

The crew was not so sure. Old Hux stood on boldly in the wake of the little sloop, gambling everything on his luck, the brief break in the weather, the toss of a coin, so it seemed to them. The two headlands, whose doubtful colors might have fitted many a blind alley in the long, rugged coast, seemed to creep out toward them, bent on their destruction. Now they could see the long swell breaking on the rocks inshore, and for that matter on reefs well off the west headland, where great spouts of white water leaped in the afternoon sun.

There was still no sign of the great harbor mentioned by the Lords of Trade, only a narrowing of the bay like the shoulders of a bottle. And there was a cork in the neck, a large island of some sort. The white sails of the sloop scudded into a passage to the west of it. Old Hux held on, but he shortened sail and put a man in the chains to heave the lead and another on the bowsprit to watch for the seaweed patch that might betray a sunken rock. The overcast had shut in and a bleak rain swept down on the wind.

Some sort of creek opened to the northwest, dim in the rain. The flying sloop ignored it and held on to the north. Old Hux followed. A small island, cone-shaped and covered with dark green trees, appeared ahead. But now the waterway was opening, and as the *Fair Lady* swung to starboard of the small green cone, the main island shut off the seaward view behind her like a closed door. On either hand rose steep hillsides covered with wet pine woods swaying and ruffling in the wind, and the open water spread a good mile from shore to shore, with the length of it running on for miles between the hills. The lead gave eleven, fourteen, twelve fathoms. No sign of shoals, even close inshore. Surely this was Chebucto, the great harbor of the French maps and renowned through the tales of the New England fishermen!

All doubt vanished as the *Fair Lady* passed inside the smaller island. There lay a sloop-of-war with the flag of England fluttering, the *Sphinx* herself, with a harbor furl in her sails, and the strange sloop running alongside her and putting a man aboard. It was the twenty-first day of June. They had been eight-and-thirty days on the voyage. There was no sign of the other transports.

ON THE second day the storm relaxed its fury and Old Huxley, dressed in his peculiar best, returned from a visit to the captain-general in high fettle.

"Name's Cornwallis, all hot stuff and ginger, a man after me own heart! Doubtful o' that red coat and gold lace, I was, knowin' sojers, but he's all right, there ain't a pennyworth o' sojer in him. Business, all business! Cabin full o' quill-drivers and ink flyin' like the rain. Papers! Sealin' wax! Despatches! He's got a pretty mess to straighten out. The French are at Louisburg to take over the fortress and Colonel Hopson up there's in a fine sweat; no ships to take his troops away, nowhere to go, doesn't even know the captain-general's on the coast. Old Mascarene and his council's at Fort Anne, up in the Bay o' Fundy, waitin' for orders. And God knows where the transports and the settlers are—sunk, most likely, them and their blessed ventilators!"

"Are you to carry despatches?" John Foy asked.

"*Fair Lady?* Nunno! We've got that special gov'ment stuff aboard—the Bibles and gunpowder and beads for the Indians and such-like that Colonel Cornwallis wants close to hand. No, there's two or three fishin' sloops from New England he's usin' to run errands. All I've got to do for the present, so I'm told, is to send a boat to explore the head o' the harbor. Like to come?" He said this with unusual deference. Some of his furious authority had gone overboard with the anchors, apparently.

Old Hux had no immediate cause to regret the invitation, for Foy brought into the boat a basket of delicacies, with two wine bottles thrusting long green necks past the napkins. The cook passed down a mess-kit of cold beef and broken biscuit for the men.

Roger and Tom had been quick to leap when Mr. Cheeny called, "Hands to the gig!" Eight in all, they rowed away in high cheer, watched by the two women and the glum remainder of the crew. They pulled over to the *Sphinx* to pick up one of the New England pilots enlisted out of the fishing sloops by Cornwallis. He was a wiry man of middle height, not over thirty, with gaunt blue jaws and bright brown eyes. He gave his name as Barnabus Merrick and he carried a fowling piece, bullet pouch and powder horn.

Roger beheld for the first time an American. He was a little disappointed. Vague tales in England had given him a notion of pious Englishmen gone half-wild in the American forest, and he had expected something between a dissenting preacher and an Indian. This fellow looked very ordinary in drab homespun and gray wool stockings, although he wore a cocked blue hat that must have cost him thirty shillings.

"What's that for?" demanded Old Hux, eyeing the gun. "Birds?"

"Of a kind," said Barnabus, settling himself on the thwart.

Huxley grunted, but John Foy leaned forward and said pointedly, "What kind of bird, precisely?"

The New Englander grinned a little. "A bird that walks like a man and howls like a wolf and ain't got no feathers barrin' one or two stuck in his topknot."

"Savages?" growled Old Hux. "These woods look peaceful as a church on Sunday morning."

"They always do," the pilot said, and spat.

Boats from the *Sphinx* were moving slowly along both shores of the harbor as if they, too, suspected unusual birds.

"Why," declared the *Fair Lady's* master, "the forest comes right down to the water's edge! No paths, no smoke—I don't believe there's been a human foot in these parts since God made the world."

"Savages ain't human," the pilot said. "Besides, the French was here three years ago, a whole fleet and army under the Duke D'Anville. Going to raise Cain with all New England, they was, but somethin' happened here to change their minds. Smallpox, some say. I never did find out, rightly."

They followed the west shore northward for three or four miles. The wind fell and the forest was a vast green silence gleaming with last night's rain. The east and west shores of the harbor drew together ahead and Old Hux said, "Well, there's the head o' salt water by the look of it."

"'Tain't," said the New England man.

"How d'ye know?"

"Been in here in fishin' vessels from home, fillin' water casks. That's the Narrers, up ahead. 'Bout half a mile wide. The harbor takes a turn to the west there, and then ye open the Basin, five mile long and two or three broad, all shut in by woody hills. The whole o' the King's Navy could ride in it, I guess."

"Gammon!" snapped Old Hux. "Have ye ever seen a fleet, pumpkin?"

"Once."

"Where was that?"

"Louisburg, the time us pumpkins took it from the Frinch."

"Umph!"

As the gig entered the Basin the sun came out, and all exclaimed as they saw the broad reach of water and the perfect shelter of the hills.

"What water d'ye get here?" Huxley demanded.

"Fifteen to forty fathom."

"If ye know half as much as ye claim," said Old Hux in something close to awe, "this is the finest harbor in Ameriky. And that shore yonder is the place to build our town."

"I used to think God dumped His left-over buildin' stores in Massachusetts after He got through makin' the world. That was afore I see Nova Scotia."

"No."

"Why not?"

"Too fur from the sea for fishermen. Town should be on the outer harbor, just inside the big island somewhere. Good beach on that island for dryin' cod."

"Cod! We've come here to build a fortress, not a stinkin' fish warehouse!"

Barnabus Merrick shrugged. "What'll ye live on? The King's rations?"

"For a year or so. After that our people will have their plantations."

"See the soil yet?"

"What about it?"

"I used to think," Barnabus drawled, "God dumped His left-over buildin' stores in Massachusetts, after He got through makin' the world. That was afore I see Nova Scotia."

"Rocks, d'ye mean?"

"And little else. On'y good soil in Nova Scotia's on the Bay o' Fundy side—and the 'Cajun farmers took up all that long ago. The on'y harvest ye'll ever see on this shore'll come from the sea, and it'll smell remarkable like fish."

ROGER was enchanted with the fellow's lack of deference. Even Old Hux could not restrain a grin. The boat's crew was not so amused. Discipline had taught them to hold their tongues in the presence of superiors like Huxley, the master, and Foy, the gentleman. They resented this drawling fellow in the thirty-shilling hat. They were

weary now from the long pull at the oars and the sun was high and hot. The gig drifted on the wide glitter of the Basin while Foy shared the contents of the basket with Old Hux, and the men munched the hard ship fare and washed it down with stale ship water from the *barrica*. The land was shuddering already in the June heat and small islands towards the east side of the Basin were going up and down like pumps in the haze.

"Now," declared Old Hux, wiping his mouth with the back of a hairy hand," we'll push on to the end o' this Basin and see if there's a river. Cornwallis says there ought to be a river somewhere."

"I can tell ye that without lookin'," Merrick said. "There's a river flows into the Basin there"—pointing to the north— "but it's a small thing. Ye could pitch a rock across it anywhere. There's no big river at Chebucto, nothin' but a couple o' fair-sized brooks."

"I see. Well, is there anythin' worth seein' up here? I've got to make a report to the captain-general."

The New Englander considered for a moment, then said in an odd voice, "Reckon there is—over yonder somewhere. On'y an Injun tale, mind. But there might be somethin' in it. I'm right curious about it, myself."

They rowed in to the west shore, and as the gig drew into the shadow of the great pines by the waterside, all the mystery of the new land seemed to rise before them like a wall. The forest was still as death. A smell of dampness, and rotting vegetation hung under the thick crown of the trees. The drip of yesterday's rain from the branches only served to emphasize the general silence. The seamen stared curiously at the great mossy boulders and the tall rugged trunks of the pines rising like pillars amongst them. They beached the boat cautiously and stepped ashore, Old Hux giving Merrick the lead— "seein' ye've got the only weapon in the company." Under the pines nothing grew but a mass of ferns, wet to the legs. The land rose steeply and the steady climb brought the sweat to every face.

At last Old Hux gasped, with a clutch at his dripping beard, "Turn to the shore a bit, along the slope. S'blood! The country's hot as Jamaiky. Who'd ha' thought it, out there on the Banks in that freezin' fog?"

After a few rods of this, there was a sound of water in the forest ahead. The little procession broke at once, the seamen scrambling wildly on, while Old Hux swore and Merrick halted, listening and staring from side to side like an alert cat. After a minute, he went on, slowly, and came to a small stream running down the slope. There amongst the lush ferns squatted the seamen, scooping up the cool water in their tarry hands, or down full length, sucking and lapping like dogs.

Tom Fuller raised a dripping and beaming face. "At last, good, sweet, cold runnin' water! Arter forty days and forty nights afloat, like Noah in his blessed ark—on'y he could lower a bucket overside any time he was dry, whilst we had to drink that stinkin' Gravesend water all the way. Ah, take a drink, sirs! Take a good long swig of it! It's life, I tell ye! And to think of it runnin' to waste in these empty woods ever since the good God made the world!"

Roger, Foy and Old Hux abandoned their dignity and got down like the others, drinking long and thirstily. Then they lay in the ferns, dabbling their hot faces for the pleasure of it. They might have dawdled there an hour, but after the first fine ecstasy there were itchings and slappings, and they noticed suddenly that a host of small black flies hung over the brook in a gauzy cloud, and crawled over their legs and hands and cheeks, whined in their ears, darted into their very eyes and the open cursing mouths of the seamen, and bit them everywhere.

THEY noticed Barnabus Merrick then. He was staring at an object just beyond the stream. It was a stump, cut with an axe perhaps two, perhaps three seasons ago. They followed him in silence. There was a succession of stumps, the trace of a path which crossed some point of the land, apparently, for soon they caught a blue glimmer of the Basin through the trees and in a few more steps emerged in a clearing beside the shore. A green tangle of undergrowth had sprung up since the trees were cut, and some of the larger pines still stood, as if the bygone axemen had been daunted by the size of them. A seaman yelled, pointing.

"Gad so!" ejaculated Old Hux, and stared. They all stared.

Against the rough bark of one of the standing pines sprawled the skeleton of a man in the tatters of a white uniform. His shoes were off and lay at his hand, and the ten toe bones, upturned, shone white in the sunshine. A rusty musket leaned against the tree beside him, with the ruin of a hat hung on the muzzle. The eye sockets of the skull appeared to examine the Englishmen intently. The lower jaw hung open, as if in amazement, and they noted that most of the teeth were gone.

Roger moved a step or two toward the grisly thing and his shoe kicked something in the bushes. It rattled. He looked down and beheld another skeleton, festooned with the green of small creeping plants, and with a clump of ferns growing richly through the white basket of the ribs. The *Fair Lady's* party abandoned their awed silence with yells.

"There's another!"

"Look there!"

"Two more yonder!"

DEAD men lay everywhere in that sunny space. The place was a charnel house. It seemed to have been cleared in great haste, trod by human feet for a matter of weeks—two months at most, the New Englander said—and then abandoned by all but the dead. In the edge of the clearing were trees, half-cut and blown down in later winds, and trees with no more than the first bite of an axe. Often the axe was still there, wedged and rusting in the cut, or leaning against the trunk, or lying in the undergrowth. And in the forest beyond, more dead men lay amongst the trees, half hidden in the ruins of brush-wood shelters that had rotted and sunk upon their tenants in the suns and rains and snows of time gone by.

The bones in the clearing, in the full blaze of the sunshine, were bleached and hard; but the skeletons in the gloom of the pines were stained with a green mold, so that each skull looked like a purser's cheese, and the bones had gone brittle and soft and had been gnawed by porcupines so Barnabas Merrick said. Some wore the shreds of white regimentals, the brass buttons green with verdigris. Some lay in breeches only, the coat and waistcoat hung with care upon one of the rotten bivouac supports. Some were wrapped in blankets, moth-eaten and moldy, with swarms of gray wood-lice crawling in the folds. Some lay naked to the world. The skulls grinned upward as if defying the Englishmen to guess their riddle.

Tom Fuller picked up a long black feather, and Old Hux snapped, "Savages!"

"Crows," said Baranbus Merrick, coolly. "And ravens. What a feast they must ha' had! Lord! The stink 'ud fetch 'em from all the country 'round!"

"Ah, but what killed these men, and who were they?" John Foy said. "I tell you, pilot, the savages must have surprised the poor devils, whoever they were, and massacred the lot."

The New Englander leaned on his gun, gazing solemnly about him. "I'll tell ye who they were—they're D'Anville's lot, that sailed for Nova Scotia from Brest, three years back. Goin' to drive the English from Louisburg and Annapolis and ravage the New England ports. Started from France and half King Louis' Navy and three or four thousand o' his best troops. Mounseer John-Care was with 'em, the governor o' Canady, and he'd arranged for a force o' French rangers to come down from Quebec and join 'em here in Nova Scotia. I remember the fuss back home in Boston when we heard of it—troops called back from the march ag'in Crown Point, Boston full o' militia from all the country 'roundabout, hulks sunk in the channel, new cannon set up in Castle Willum—Lord! And prayer-meetin's! 'Twas the prayers done it, I guess. The Lord riz up and smote 'em ag'in and ag'in. D'Anville made poor weather o' the westerlies and was all summer gittin' acrost. His fleet got off this coast dyin' o' scurvy, jest in time to meet the line gale—it come a mite early that year, a week afore the sun crossed the 'quator—and there they was, caught on a lee shore with crews too sick to handle the canvas and claw off. Some was wrecked on the Isle o' Sable, some on the coast itself. Some got dismasted and drifted off when the wind come 'round, some bore away for the Western Isles and the Caribbee waters. What was left gathered here to Chebucto."

"How d'ye know all this?" demanded Old Hux.

"From the tales o' the savages, partly. Partly from some New England fishermen that was caught here and held aboard one o' the French men-o'-war for a time. The Duke d'Anville poisoned hisself—died awful sudden, anyhow—and they buried him on that small round island in the outer harbor. The vice-admiral put the sick ashore and sent word cross-country to the 'Cajun settlements for help. The 'Cajuns cut a path through from Fundy Bay, and sent provisions and a mob o' Injuns for reinforcements. The scurvy was still ragin'—look at them skulls, hardly a one but spat out his teeth afore he died—and when that began to clear up they all come down with the bloody flux and some other plague we never did figger out. The Injuns stole the dead men's clo'es, caught the infection, and pretty soon *they* was dyin' like flies. They got scared and lit out. There was no sign o' the governor's troops from Canady. The vice-admiral give up in despair, locked hisself in his cabin and throwed hisself on his sword. I dunno where they buried *him*. Fact is, I never did know where they left their dead till I see this place today, though I heard tell of 'em chuckin' a lot overboard in the harbor itself. One way or another, they left more'n eleven hundred dead here to Chebucto; and countin' what they buried at sea on the voyage out, they'd lost more'n twenty-three hundred sojers and sailors afore they quit this place and sailed for home. Preachers in Boston said there'd been nothin' like it since the Spanish Ar-may-da."

"Let's get out o' this," Tom Fuller said. "Them bones give me a turn. Remind me of a shipmate that fell out o' luck . . ."

"We'll look a bit further," snorted Old Hux stoutly. "I've got a report to make to Colonel Cornwallis and I'll not have it said Job Huxley turned back from a parcel o' dead bones."

Barnabus Merrick led off again and for two hours they picked their way through scattered clearings by the shore, separated by patches of uncut forest. In some the bones lay thick, in others they were few. In one spot there had been some proper burials; but the stony soil and tough tree-roots had been too much for the survivors and a dozen skeletons lay in a

careful row, side by side, awaiting graves that would never be dug this side of Judgment Day. The single word *Perdu* was cut with a knife in a birch tree behind them. There were inscriptions in other places, dates like 15 *Septembre* 1746 and *Trepasse* 2 *Oct* 46 and the single word *Dieu*. Someone with pride in his battalion had carved with skill in the trunk of a maple, *Regiment de Ponthieu*. The grim word *Mort* was in several places.

Finally, as the Englishmen turned back along the shore toward their boat, they came upon an inscription cut in a big birch at the waterside.

"What's that mean?" Old Hux demanded.

"*A l'Acadie?*" Foy said. "Well, it's the French name for Nova Scotia and—"

"Alack-a-day! A damned good name for it!" Old Hux looked over his shoulder to that ossuary in the forest. "And this, ecod, is where we've come to build a city!"

CHAPTER IX

GENESIS

OLD HUX sent for Roger in the fine June twilight, and Roger found him in the cabin with a case-bottle and two glasses at his elbow.

"Sit down," the master said, "and help yourself. Tut, man! Shift your hold. Always take a woman by the waist and a bottle by the neck!"

Roger took a thoughtful sip of this unusual hospitality. What did Old Hux want?

"Well, young feller," Huxley said, "ye've seen a bit o' the sea and a bit o' this godforsaken country; what are ye goin' to do, eh? Take up a bit o' land wi' the rest o' that cockney mob and try to grub a livin' amongst the rocks and stumps?"

"What else is there?"

"I'll give it to ye straight," said Job Huxley, fixing him with a bold blue eye. "Ye're a gentleman adventurer, I take it, and don't stick at trifles if I heard that bum-bailiff in the Thames aright. Stay with me, then. I'm clearin' my passengers ashore—or to the transport that came in today, whichever they want—and sailin' for Annapolis in the mornin' to fetch Colonel Mascarene and his council here to start a gov'ment o' the province. In a couple o' months the *Fair Lady* goes off charter. Then for free-lance ladings and help-yourself trading up and down this coast—wherever there's a chance to pick up the pretty yellow-boys." He rubbed his tarry thumb and forefinger suggestively. "Nova Scotia's all but an island—nailed to the continent like a cleat to the mast. Back country's got no roads and it's full of savages anyhow. All settlement must be along the coast and everything's got to move by sea. That's my chance—and yours."

"What about the transports?"

"Too big, too clumsy for this coast—'specially the Bay o' Fundy, where I go tomorrow. In the Bay harbors the tide rises and falls thirty or forty feet, and at the ebb ye're lyin' aground on your bilge and wonderin' where the ocean's gone. *Fair Lady's* got a good stiff back and ribs—Whitby-built, nothin' like 'em—stand hard lyin', winter weather, anythin' ye please. Only competition'll come from New England vessels and there's room for all, 'specially after the fightin' starts. Wonderful how His Majesty looses his purse-strings when the guns begin to pop. Now me, I know my ship and I know the sea, and in a month or two I'll know this coast like the palm o' me hand"—he spread his great paw on the boards, seamy and calloused and none too clean (like his conscience, Roger thought)—"but I'll need someone like you that can talk the high-falutin' lingo o' the captain-general's staff."

"Why?"

"To bait the silver hook! The Lords o' Trade'll pour a flood o' money into this colony in the next few years, and that's a stream I want to fish."

Roger was silent. He did not love Old Hux but he found the ruffian's bluntness engaging and even found something to respect in his energy and courage and his sea-ability. Old Hux would not stick at law. Nor I, he thought—not the law of the Hanoverians and the men who put them on England's throne! Money was the thing, the pretty yellow-boys. Get 'em any way you could. Five years, ten years, and then home to Kent and the peace of Suddenholt. Still . . .

"Well?" the master grunted.

Roger's head wagged slowly. How to explain a whimsy that he did not understand himself? "I feel my fortune's ashore there, somehow. Because I'm a landsman, I suppose. I hate the sea."

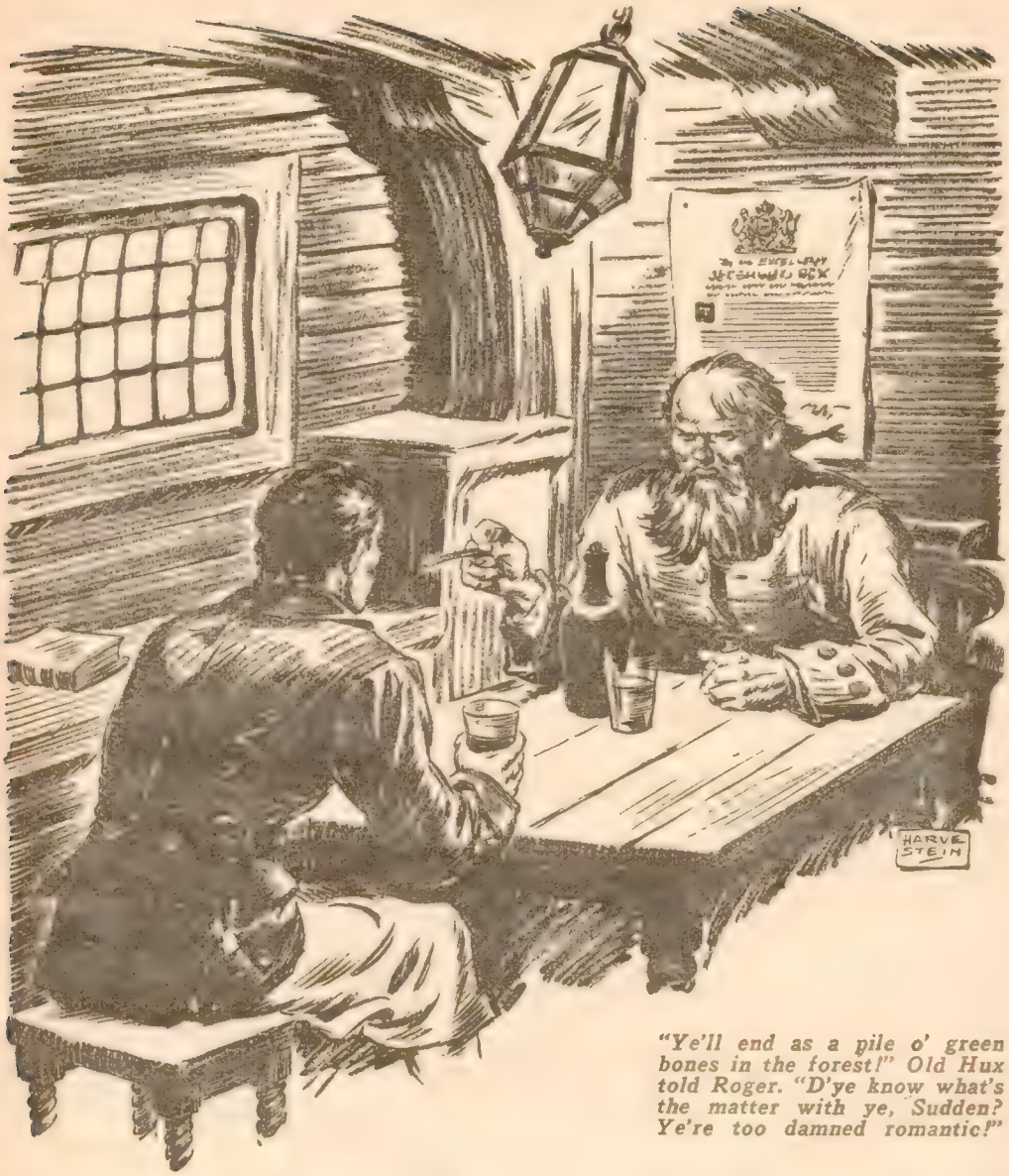
"Who don't?" Huxley said.

"Well, it's more than that. It sounds silly, I admit. There's something about the country"—he nodded toward the open stern-window of the cabin—" a sort of challenge, a riddle to be solved, a game of chance with strange cards . . . I don't quite know how to put it. . . ."

"Umph! Ye'll end as a pile o' green bones in the forest somewhere. D'ye know what's the matter with ye, Sudden? Ye're too damned romantic!"

Roger smiled. "What an epitaph!" He left the cabin with an odd suspicion that someone had been listening at the bulkhead, and that Old Hux knew it. The girl Jenny, no doubt; her servant-curiosity.

In the forecastle he and Tom packed their duds under the gaze of silent men. The other "artisans" were staying with Old Hux, not liking the shore, "till summat's been done to keep off the savages." Those dead men in the forest



"Ye'll end as a pile o' green bones in the forest!" Old Hux told Roger. "D'ye know what's the matter with ye, Sudden? Ye're too damned romantic!"

had impressed them. On deck Roger drew the American pilot aside.

"Merrick—"

"Call me Barney."

"Barney, then. What happened when you and Old Hux reported to Cornwallis? What's decided?"

"Nawthin's decided—yit. Thought we had big news, me and Old Bullroarer, but Colonel Cornwallis jest shrugged them fine shoulders o' his and went on to talk about somethin' else. Dead men don't bite. It's live Frinch—and Injuns—he's got on his mind. But he agreed with me and the cap'n o' the *Spink* that the Basin's no place for this town. I said 'twas too fur inland for the fishery, and the man-o'-war cap'n added that the town must command the outer harbor or all's worthless. Ye should ha' seen Huxley's face—enough to make a cat laugh. Well, then Cornwallis got sot on the notion o' buildin' the town on that pine point atween the harbor and the nor'west arm—argues he can defend the harbor entrance there and same time have a short bit o' land to watch ag'in the Injuns. That's the military mind for ye! Can't expect a sojer to see the shoals off o' that point and the foul ground right ag'in the beach. Have to build long wharves to take

the shippin', and the wharves wouldn't last any longer'n the first line gale—ye've on'y to look at that breach at Point Pleasant to know there's a tremenjus sea beats on it in southeasters. Rocks as big as tea chests hove up amongst the trees."

"What's your notion, Barney?"

"West side o' the harbor jest inside the small island—the one they're callin' George's Island arter the King. Put cannon on that island and ye command the anchorage. Water's deep right in to the west shore and ye've got a pretty level strip along the foot o' the ridge to build your warehouses and such-like. The ridge rises to a peak that must command the country back of it for miles—a nat'ral citadel. Build the town on the lee side o' that hill for shelter from the nor'west wind—got to think o' the weather, see? The Frinch didn't think o' that when they built Louisburg and they freeze half to death in winter o' consequence. In clearin' the slope ye can get plenty o' good spruce and pine logs for spiles and cribs, and all the rock ballast God had left over from makin' the world—enough to build wharves from here to Jerusalem. Cornwallis is awful sot on a stream for fresh water but I don't see what odds it makes. Plenty o' springs in the hillside and ye can dig a hole anywhere in this country and git good water. 'Taint like Inja or them other hot places that's nawthin' but sand and thirsty savages."

"What does the sloop-of-war captain say?"

"The *Spink*? Agrees with me. All he cares about, o' course, is a good shore defense for the anchorage and a place to careen ships. A stiff-necked feller. I kep' callin' your skipper 'Cap'n Huxley' and the *Spink* man kep' remindin' me there wasn't any captains present but hisself—Mr. Huxley bein' *master* of a snow under charter to the Lords o' Trade. Well, down home we call the master of anythin' bigger 'n a shallop Cap'n—and we talk the way we want."

There was something refreshing about that, and Roger grinned. The New World! It really was new, everything about it. A little too cocksure, perhaps, a little too scornful of what was old; but what other spirit could conquer this enormous green wilderness?

SEAMEN from the *Sphinx* had cut a clearing on the shore toward Point Pleasant and erected a few sailcloth tents, a little white cluster in the edge of the pine woods, guarded by a handful of red-jacketed marines. A paltry beginning, but not much could be done until the fleet arrived. One or two transports had straggled in to the anchorage, and Old Hux now transferred the Foys and their maid to one of them, wanting their berth for Colonel Mascarene. Roger and Tom stood near the gangway, waiting for a duty boat from the *Sphinx* to take them to the tents ashore, when John Foy came with hand outstretched in farewell. The silver buttons gleamed on his scarlet coat and the great full wig and dragoon hat made his long brown face seem longer still. The scar of the old swordcut twitched in his cheek.

"Good-by, Mr. Sudden. We'll meet ashore one of these days."

"Yes," Roger muttered lamely, gazing past the man to his wife. She came along the deck with her long, light step, followed by the stolid Jenny.

"Good-by, Mr. Sudden." Her smile was impersonal. She turned to bestow it on several of the crew and passed down the gangway without a backward glance. Her lips had that eager look which had nothing to do with men, and the male in Roger was piqued.

He seemed to see a sardonic look in Foy's eyes, and he flushed a little, muttered goodby with lips unaccountably tight. Their boat pulled away smartly, Mr. Cheeny at the tiller, and the white ribbon on Mary Foy's hat fluttered gaily in the harbor breeze.

Tom Fuller murmured, "As fine a leg as ever I see."

"Eh?"

"That maid c' m'lady's—Jenny."

"Oh!"

Transports came in from the immensity of the sea in weather-beaten twos and threes. By July first, not one was missing. Their reassembly, safe and sound, in this vaguely known inlet of a savage shore three thousand stormy miles from Tilbury was nothing less than miraculous after D'Anville's fatal experience. No wonder the French found the luck of the English incredible!

The ships lay moored inside George's Island, their bulwarks lined with staring faces, so exactly like the squadron in the Thames that, standing beside his tent on the Point Pleasant shore, Roger had a feeling that the voyage and these wooded hills were all a dream. Only the bumboats were missing. But there were other craft laden with fresh stores and the first consignments of sawn timber from Boston, slim New England sloops and schooners resting like gulls on the harbor water. From the ships there was a constant traffic of boats to the west shore. Mr. Inigo Bruce, the military engineer, and Charles Morris, the New England surveyor, were a-land every day with Cornwallis and his staff, a little swarm of bright red flies that buzzed up and down the harborside and came to rest at last under the shoulder of the sugarloaf hill which Barnabus Merrick's shrewd brown eye had noticed from the first.

Roger and the handful of other emigrants in their small encampment near Point Pleasant were thus left high and dry, and presently their little canvas oasis was invaded and overrun by a happy-go-lucky company in red coats

with green facings and soiled white breeches and black gaiters—Warburton's Regiment, from Louisburg. The soldiers fell to with axes and mattocks and a most amazing store of oaths, clearing a swath up the slope for the regimental camp.

Roger regarded them with mixed feelings, thinking back to Scotland, for this had been one of Johnnie Cope's regiments, scattered by Prince Charlie's men at Prestonpans. They maintained an indifferent guard and spoke of Indians with contempt; they had seen some at Louisburg—"a lousy set of rascals without the spirit of a dog." That, my bold boys, Roger thought, is what you said of the Highlanders until you met them by the wall of Preston Park.

He picked up his worn portmanteau and trudged off along the shore, with Tom Fuller at his heels protesting futilely that a gentleman shouldn't carry his own baggage. At the foot of the sugarloaf they found a curious tumult; seamen from the transports clearing bushes from the waterfront and hewing down trees with more energy than skill; platoons of infantry strung like scarlet beads along the shore and through the hillside woods, bayonets gleaming, muskets cocked, watching for Indians but keeping a sharp eye also for the cockney girls; a swarm of emigrants about the harassed man Morris, following his every step, demanding that he lay off their fifty or their hundred acres; army officers wandering in twos and threes as if for mutual support in the rabble, or standing in scarlet groups, gold-laced hats together, hands twiddling canes behind, looking as if something urgent were toward—and probably discussing last night's play at cards; women squabbling or ogling the soldiers, small boys darting about, babies shrieking.

Cornwallis and his staff were absorbed in affairs of state. Old Hux had brought Paul Mascarene and his council from Fort Anne, and about an oak table in the great stern cabin of the *Beaufort* transport they were holding a momentous meeting under the captain-general's eye—the beginning of government.

The shore at the chosen site was now revealed as a narrow, stony beach with a strip of swamp behind it pocked with small stagnant pools. The seamen with axes had flung down logs to make a causeway to the hillside, and over this men were carrying the boards and timbers floated ashore from the American vessels. Two or three marquees were pitched over the stumps at the foot of the hill for the commissary, but there was storeroom only for immediate needs, salt beef, biscuit, a few hogsheads of rum. The great part of the stores must remain in the ships until there was permanent shelter ashore. That, Roger guessed, would not be for weeks, and more probably months.

THE hill shut off a light west breeze. In the narrow clearing by the shore the July sun fell like a bludgeon. Sweating cockneys cried that they had expected a cool country and, ecod, here it was as hot as Afriky! A moist reek of unwashed bodies rose and mingled in the clearing with a scent of newcut pine and spruce and the tang of raw New England rum. Roger sniffed the queer blend pensively. Was this the smell of America? Afterwards he knew it was, and would be for at least a century to come, until a clearing had been hewn far into the heart of the continent and men and women had leisure to be nice.

The cockneys had fared well on the long voyage. There was little sickness in the ships. For that they could thank the newfangled ventilators, but they were not a thankful lot. Their voices were raised now in complaint about the food, the lack of shelter, the flies, the climate and the land itself. Axes had been put in their hands but they would not cut a chip until their lots had been marked off by the surveyor. What! Cut a tree for someone else?

Barney Merrick growled, "Cornwallis is so busy bein' Governor o' His Majesty's Province o' Nova Scotia that he ain't got time to set about buildin' his capital."

Roger smiled. "What's he done to displease you now?"

"Sent a sloop-o'-war off to the Saint John River to watch the Frinch there, another to see what's doin' up Canso way. Cap'n How's off overland to see about a treaty with the Injuns. Someone else is off to warn the 'Cajun Frinch they've got to take the oath of allegiance to His Majesty. So it goes—the only officers with experience in this country sent over the hills and far away to chase wild geese and nawthin' bein' done right here. These emigrants won't work 'less it's on their own lots. Cornwallis should tell 'em to pitch in first and clear the townsite or, by God, there'll be no lots. If that don't fetch 'em, why, stop their rations! Otherwise they'll stand about and jaw from July to Etarnity—and Cornwallis ain't got that long. These fools think because the sun is hot today there ain't no winter in these parts. They'll larn!"

"What they really need," Roger suggested, not without malice, "is someone to show 'em how to do things. Someone like you."

"Um. Well, there's other men can show 'em. Cornwallis has done one smart thing—sent to Fort Anne for Gorham's company o' rangers. There's the lads! Backwoods Massachusetts men and half-breed Mohawks. Build a blockhouse while your reg'lar officer's drawin' up the plans. Know how to live off the country, and how to live *in* it, summer and winter. Go anywhere, any time, foot or canoe, it makes no odds. And they're skilled in fightin' Injun-

CAPTAIN GORHAM

fashion, which is what Cornwallis is goin' to need most. Reg'lar sojers in this country ain't worth His Majesty's sixpence a day—they ain't worth their rations. Pretty cocky now, o' course. But wait'll they've found a sentry or two with his head knocked in and his hair peeled off. Wait'll they've seen a man cut up with knives and tomahawks till he looks like a lump o' offal from a slaughterhouse."

Barney smelled of rum and the stuff had set his tongue wagging with a most unusual fluency. Roger listened with a faint smile on his lips. Old Hux was right, he thought, the man had Injuns on the brain. "Did you ever," he suggested ironically, "see a regiment cut up with Highland broadswords?"

"Did y'ever," countered Barney with eyes like slits, "see one o' your own friends knocked on the head and scalped while still livin', and then tortured for hours till the last gasp o' breath was wrung out o' him? Mind, I'll say this for the Micmacs, they didn't gather scalps till the white nations offered rewards for 'em. They tortured prisoners, but not with fire—which is hell's own delight—till the Frinch rangers and mission Injuns come down from Quebec and showed 'em how. Them mission Injuns can roast a man so delicate he don't die for two or three days—he's better eatin' that way."

"What! Cannibals?"

"Are ye surprised? All the tribes about the Great Lakes and south o' the Saint Lawrence eat their enemies. Take a man, rip his scalp off, roast him to death and pass him through your intestines as a final insult—that's the way to finish off your enemies! A woman's even better, to their way o' thinkin'. She yells louder when she feels the fire, and there's more fat on her, and her meat's more tender."

Roger felt a little sick. "Don't talk such filthy nonsense, man! You're drunk!"

"I'm sober as a judge! 'Tain't all one-sided, mind. Back home in New England and down York way we've made war-partners o' the Six Nations—Mohawks and such—because they hate the Frinch and so do we. And a Mohawk is the devil's own. But at least he don't pretend to be a Christian! Them mission Injuns from Quebec. . . . Listen, friend! There's jest two things a savage understands about the Christian faith—hell's fire and the crucifixion. He's seen those things—he's *used* 'em. The rest runs off him like water off a duck."

Barney's voice had risen with his memories. Roger sensed a peculiar hush about them and, turning, saw a gathering of emigrants regarding the New Englander with interest and awe.

"What's 'e talkin' about?" said one to Roger. It was Vace, the journeyman barber. He recognized Roger as he spoke and set up a glad cry. "Liz! Bob! Maggs! Oy! The lot o' ye—'ere's Mr. Sudden!"

TO ROGER in his self-seen role of footloose adventurer, the reappearance of Tooley Street was a confounded nuisance. What should have been an episode, to look back upon with amusement in some after-time of ease and well-being, had carried over into the present, where it had no place. It was not snobbery—he had rubbed elbows with common humanity too often, in too many places, to be finicky in this outpost in the wilds. But they clustered about him, they looked up to him, and there was an air of relief about them as if—as if they had found an ass to carry their burdens. In his annoyance he was curt with them, but his curtness merely brought a wheedling note into their voices. There was no shaking them off; there was not room enough for that. It was outrageous that in this enormous new world he should find himself confined to a five-acre clearing with this importunate rabble.

Well, the thing was to widen the clearing! He set them to work with axes and billhooks from the commissary. There was some murmuring about lots, but he crushed that in a voice whose cold violence astonished him quite as much as them. He took an axe himself by way of example and to satisfy a craving for action. The long idleness in Tooley Street and in the Thames, and the monotony of weeks at sea had wound up his nerves like a spring.

The first bite of the sharp steel into a pine trunk was a joy, and as the white chips flew he wanted to sing. Sweat broke out on him, an ooze first and then a stream. He threw off waistcoat and shirt regardless of the blackflies, and forgot the people, even the place.

Nothing existed but the tall brown trunk and the white gash where the axe fell, seen through a glaze of sweat, and the lift and the swing and the satisfying *chock!*

This was the way you began, with one tree at the edge of the unknown; and from that you went on to the next and the next. You swept away the shadow and the mystery and the menace, and opened the land to the broad sky where the winds blew always and there was light. You were a god with a flaming sword, sweeping away the darkness that nourished things savage and evil, and while a tree stood high enough to cast a shadow you would go on and on and on!

It was not so godlike after a time. The chips grew smaller, although he struck with the same furious energy. It occurred to him that the tree was very big. He shifted around the trunk a little and began again, and again for a time the chips fell large and fast. Then the narrow slot again, and the steel striking straight in, and the slow rain of little battered chips. He shifted again. He made a gradual circuit of the tree; then he was back to the original slot. He paused, panted. It was not as simple as he had thought. He would have to widen the cut. That was not so interesting nor so satisfying. He wanted to get to the heart of the tree and it seemed a waste of time and energy to hew a wider gash at the very outside.

He thought now of his little band of followers and inspected them, leaning on the axe. Tom Fuller, Bob, Killick, Maggs, Ned and Jack, each had picked a tree and circled it in faithful imitation of himself. And there was the great creature Lumley, with her hairy and enormous forearms, swinging an axe as well as any. The other women and Vace, the pale barber, were content to hack at the undergrowth with billhooks. Old Trope sat guardian on their poor baggage, a thin gray spirit of evil in the sunshine.

"Where's Little Bob?" Roger demanded.

Trope looked embarrassed. "'E's orf."

"What d'you mean, off?"

"Orf for the cities of Ameriky in one o' the Boston vessels. Been talkin' about it ever since we got 'ere—didn't like the look o' this place—said t'wasn't what 'e expected and no chance for 'is profession, like. Asked one o' the schooner men if there was guineas to be 'ad in the Massachusetts colony and the feller said, ecod, yes, the streets o' Boston was paved with 'em! So 'e's orf."

"There's others," added Mrs. Maggs, darkly.

"Who?"

"Why, a lot o' them Wappin' men didn't never intend to chop no trees nor dig no plantations. All they wanted was a passage acrost—'eard 'em jawin' about it in the ship comin' over. Said there was easy wages in the shippin' trade out o' New York and such places and the Lords o' Trade could plant their colony in 'ell for all they cared. They're slippin' away in the Boston vessels—seen some of 'em, 'aven't we, Missus Lumley?"

"Yes," uttered the Lumley hoarsely, "and I dunno but what they're wise. Plantations! These 'ere trees is too mortal 'ard to chop. Maybe we're doin' of it wrong."

"So you are!" said a new voice.

They regarded a tall man coming toward them up the slope. He was gaunt and blue-jowled and loose in his movements, walking with a long stride and placing each step exactly before the other with easy precision, as if he had walked a tight-rope all his life. He wore moccasins decorated with blue and red beads, long leather leggings from ankle to crotch with a fringe of jiggling leather points along the seams, and a loose hunting shirt of some soft thin hide. His hair was gathered into a short stiff queue bound with a thong and over it he wore a cocked blue hat, much faded and stained. Three men stepped silent as cats at his heels, dressed like him except that their heads were shaven to a scalp-lock stiffened with grease, and one had an eagle feather thrust in it; but they were not so tall, and their dark faces shone as if oiled and were hairless by nature where his was shaven. Their cheekbones were large and square and their noses high like his, but with wide-flaring nostrils; and their eyes were black and cunning like the eyes of a mongrel dog where his were a startling blue in the brown face, like a glimpse of summer sky through a slit in a blanket.

"Gorham's my name," he said easily. "Cap'n Gorham, the shepherd o' the rangers. These"—jerking a thumb over his shoulder—"are some o' my lambs." He smiled.

Roger smiled, too, and remarked coolly, "They look to me more like wolves."

THE wolves stood, blank-faced, a pace behind him, regarding the cockneys with a faintly hostile contempt. Tooley Street stared back, astonished. This leather-clad group belonged in a booth at Saint Bartholomew's Fair, with a barker charging tuppence at the door.

Captain Gorham picked up the axe. "If I talk like a schoolmaster," he announced with a grin, "blame Colonel Mascarene. I've spent the past five years showing his Fort Anne garrison how to get firewood and keep their hair on at the same time. Now I'm sent to another lot o' Johnny-come-latelies. No offense, I hope? Now when ye go to fell a tree. . . ."

He explained the art of felling a tree: the wedge cut out low down on the side the tree was to fall, the main cut on the opposite side and slightly above, and hewn out wide from the start. He demonstrated on Roger's pine.

He did not seem to work very hard. He gave the axe a long swing and brought it whistling down, but his movements were leisurely and after the first stroke he did not change his footing an inch. There was a magic about it. Man and axe were one thing, a whip with a lash of sharp steel. The movement began about his knees somewhere and traveled up his lean torso as he swung, and along the arms and wrists until at last the blade lashed home. A snow of large white chips flew and fell. The big pine swayed and began to fall, gently at first, gathering speed, hissing as it went, and at last smote the earth with a crash that shook it.

There was a large silence. Roger looked over his shoulder and saw Tooley Street in a wide half-circle and a little in front of them a group of scarlet coats and gold-laced hats.

"Well, my man," said Colonel Cornwallis, "you seem to have made a start." The captain-general's cheeks were swollen with fly-bites and beaded with sweat and there were lines or worry in his forehead under the white edge of the wig. But his eyes were steady and there was a determined twist to his mouth. Beside him stood an aide, much like himself—Bulkeley, the Irish dragoon officer, his right-hand man. A pair of handsome military bachelors in the thirties, weary of London's drawing rooms, eager to do something solid in the colonies—it was written all over them. "These people—you seem to have got 'em working," he said to Roger. "Working hard, by jove! How did you do it? What's your influence with 'em?"

Roger shrugged. "They seemed to expect someone to tell them what to do. So I told 'em."

"And set 'em the example, eh, Gorham? You see, Bulkeley? The thing must be done in military fashion—divide the people into groups and put over them some fellow from their own ship's company, some energetic fellow like this, who's not afraid to tell 'em what to do and see that they do it. Hinshelwood! Make a note of this, please. A general order: Each ship's passengers shall be in charge of a man of their own company—they may select him, if they wish—who shall be answerable to me. He shall be styled 'captain' of the company—I trust that won't offend your military sensibilities, Bulkeley—and shall be rewarded in the matter of rations and perhaps pay, later on. All complaints to be made through the 'captain'—I shall hear no others, mark that—and he shall draw his company's rations and tools and see that they are properly used. Note that especially, Mr. Commissary, and notify the clerk of stores. Tomorrow after the noon meal I wish to meet all the 'captains' on the beach.

"See that this is fair-copied at once, Hinshelwood. Nesbitt! Gray! You'll see that copies are distributed before night to each ship's company. That will be all for the present. The system can be elaborated as we go along. And—ah!—Hinshelwood, add that one of Captain Gorham's rangers shall be available to each company, to show 'em how to use an axe and built huts for 'emselves. Um! One other thing. Our present water supply seems confined to the small brook which runs down to the swamp behind the beach. Bulkeley, please see that a reliable man—one of Warburton's sergeants will do—is posted to patrol the stream. Any person, man or woman, committing a nuisance within twenty feet of the brook shall be publicly flogged on the beach by the stoutest drummers of the garrison. And that reminds me—Mr. Bruce, you'll kindly see that a whipping post and a pair of stocks are set up on the beach at the earliest opportunity."

The great man walked away and his perspiring staff fell in behind.

Roger turned to his axe again. There was no pleasure in it any more, none of that first ecstatic fury. It was labor, now; sweat in the eyes and running down the loins, raw hands, sore muscles, the jar of axe-blows running up the bones and smiting something sensitive behind the eyeballs, and thirst and weariness and flies, and knowing there were thousands—millions—of trees and that it took an hour, two hours to hew one down and slash the branches off. For a tree was just a thicket on end; when you cut it down it cumbered the earth and your work was just begun. You could not count it finished, that one tree, until the trunk had been cut in proper lengths and rolled away to the hut sites, and the branches flung into a heap and burned to a flutter of ashes! It would take years. What a penance!

CHAPTER X

HALIFAX

THE summer marched on—and its footsteps burned. Even the rangers complained of the heat. But it was the emigrants who truly suffered. They came ashore from the transports, the "husbandmen," the "artisans," their women and their noisy broods, pale from the London streets and the confinement of the ocean passage, twenty-five hundred of them swarming between the hilltop and the shore. The sun blistered them. The blackflies tortured them by day and the mosquitoes by night. They rubbed the sunburns and scratched the bites, and broke out in sores and blamed it on the food. They chafed their hands on the axe-handles, cut themselves with the blades, and felled trees on each other. Children scorched themselves in the slash fires and lost themselves in the woods and fell off the makeshift wharves. The "reputed surgeons" of

the Whitehall advertisement went from overwork to indifference and at last to disrepute. But the clearing grew.

The colonists eked out the meager ration of salt meat and dried pease and hard ship bread with fish caught in the harbor, but symptoms of scurvy appeared. They drank from the guarded water supply—and also from the stagnant pools above the beach and in every nook of the woods, which gave them dysentery. They set the woods afire with their careless slash-burning and had to fall on with branches of green spruce, with shovels, with sacks, with the very rags off their backs, to save the little they had won. They quarreled, man and man, woman and woman, and gang and gang, with fists and claws and sticks and stones. They cursed the king, the parliament, the soldiers, the sailors, the governor and all his staff; they cursed their captains, they cursed the food, the tools, the rocks, the woods, the weather, the luck. Yet the clearing grew.

And the town began. It began with tents and brushwood bivouacs beside the first slender trail, which followed the south bank of the brook up the hill. Then methodical Inigo Bruce set his plan on a stump and measured off thirty feet each side of the trail; and Cornwallis called it George Street out of compliment to His Majesty. Then the huts began, with four walls of stakes driven into the earth cheek by jowl, with roofs of old sailcloth and boards from Boston and strips of birch bark, with chimneys of sticks and dried clay, and no light but the gleam of day in the open door. And the huts spread, so that Inigo Bruce must lay off a street parallel with the harbor and just above the beach and the swamp, this to be called Bedford Row out of compliment to the First Lord of the Admiralty. The huts spread again, and Inigo Bruce laid off another cross street above Bedford Row; and this was Holles Street in compliment to the Prime Minister. There were so many compliments to pay for the patronage of the expedition—Granville, for the Lord Privy Seal; Sackville, for the President of the Council; Grafton, for the Lord Chamberlain; Argyll, for the Keeper of the Great Seal of Scotland; and, of course, the Prince of Wales must have a Prince Street not too far from George, and perhaps a Duke Street would do for the other noble lords—thank God, there would be enough streets to go 'round when all were settled. And for the head of the Board of Trade and Plantations, whose finger was biggest in this affair? What less than the town itself—Halifax!

"'Allyfax," the cockneys said, and laughed—and swore. They looked at Bedford Row and Holles Street and George Street, the straggles of mean huts amongst the stumps and stones. Was it for this they had left the civilized comfort of Saint Giles and Wapping and Whitechapel, of Pickleherring Street and Dirty Lane and Bandyleg Walk?

"Give me Tooley Street," said Mrs. Maggs, and voiced the sentiment of all.

AMERICAN sloops and schooners were coming now in swarms—twenty in a single day, some with provisions, some with lumber, some with cattle and sheep. Others came to dry their Bank-caught fish in the new security of Chebucto. Some came with stocks of notions and rum—mostly rum—for sale to the townsmen. Some came out of sheer curiosity. They came and went—and when they went, a few more names went missing from the roll call of the emigrants, a few more voices were silent at the ration drawing. It was not that fields looked greener to the south; they had seen enough of New World earth. It was the highways and alleyways of towns that they wanted—real towns of brick and slate and cobblestones, and shops and carriages, and beaten streets and the reek of sea-coal fires.

But most of all they wanted their alley-rat freedom again. This business of "captains" and orders and rations and inspections—why, you might as well go for a sojer!

Yet Roger's own little company clung to him. They seemed to look upon him as some sort of talisman. He felt the drag of their minds like a physical burden, and cursed them and cursed himself—and went on with it. They had formed themselves upon him like a habit, and since one bad habit deserved another he began to drink, as a relief from the daily drudgery.

A swarm of sutlers following the English troops from Louisburg had set up stalls and small dark dens above the beach for the sale of rum, their chief commodity. It was cheap, to match the resources of the soldiers and the people, and strong, to match their thirst. Roger began to imbibe a good deal of it in the long summer evenings after the day's work, returning with a solemn unsteadiness to his bivouac at dark. Often as he reeled up George Street in the darkness he was accosted by women. Some hailed him by name, as if they had marked him and inquired. It was like Drury Lane—where a good many of them came from, he suspected. Invariably he muttered, "Not tonight, ladies," doffed his hat gravely and went on. But one night a girl ran after him and caught his arm.

"I don't want your money, sweet. Don't ye know me?"

It was Sally Madigan. She was in rags and her face was grimed with hovering about the fires, but she was pretty still. He considered her in the light of a rum-shop doorway and fished in his breeches for a coin.

"It's my last sixpence, Sally. Take it and

good luck to you, my girl. Now let me go."

They were standing near the top of George Street and the girl turned and looked down the short length of it, past the rough knoll where the parade ground was to be—with a church at one end and a courthouse at the other—past the rows of hovels to the beach and the harbor. She gave the coin a little toss in her hand. She sang in the husky yet sweet voice he remembered from that day in Tooley Street—

Sing a song o' sixpence, a pocketful o' rye,
Four-and-twenty blackbirds baked in a pie.
When the pie was opened the birds began to sing;
Wasn't that a dainty dish to set before a king?"

—and turning swiftly, planted a kiss on his own grimy cheek and vanished.

On the hilltop, where his own little company lay in their brushwood dens, he found the bivouac he shared with Tom and threw himself down. His bed was a heap of spruce twigs, once fragrant and green, but now brown and dead and full of little red spiders that ran over his face in the dark. Faithful Tom loosed his belt and took off his shoes, a nightly performance now for weeks.

"Tom," said Roger thickly. "I've spent our last sixpence. It's gone—our little fortune. Fortune! I used to think of fortune as a woman, Tom. I used to see her very clearly. She sat naked in the sunshine across the seas somewhere, with a sky behind her as blue as porcelain . . ."

"They're a-goin' to draw the lots in a few days now, sir. Fifty blessed acres each. That's the on'y fortin I know."

". . . and she had a golden skin and a queer sleepy smile on her face . . ."

"Some old sweetheart o' your'n, likely, sir."

". . . and she'd many breasts and . . ."

"Ecod, sir, you *are* drunk tonight! Go to sleep!"

THE lots were drawn at seven o'clock on an August morning under the eye of Mr. Bruce and in accordance with a plan drawn up under the eye of Cornwallis. Heads of families, marshaled by their captains, shuffled past a box and drew their slips. Single men, by order, formed "families" of four and selected a man to draw. As the slips were drawn a hubbub arose to the summer sky. Some of the most shiftless had drawn lots in the coveted area between the site of the governor's house and the beach, where there was easy commerce with the ships, protection from all dangers, and the convenience of the town well and the grog-shops. Some of the more earnest laborers had drawn bits of swamp or a litter of boulders far up the hillside or in the still-uncleared woods toward Point Pleasant or the north. What shocked them all was the discovery that the town of Mr. Bruce's plan occupied no more than two-hundred acres, to be enclosed with palisades and guarded by four or five log-and-earth forts, and the "plantations" promised in the London advertisement must be laid out far into the wilderness—and even then reduced in size.

"What's it mean, sir?" demanded the little bald man, Vace. "There was to be fifty acres for me, and ten for the old 'ooman and ten for each o' the kids—that makes ninety. I can add, sir, damme!"

"Can you divide?" Rogers said. "Ninety acres would take nigh half the town. And what about the half-pay ensigns who were promised two hundred acres, captains four hundred, and so on?"

"Then it's a bloody swindle!"

"Call it what you like. The thing boils down to a town lot each—enough to build a hut on—and five acres a family somewhere outside the settlement, that way." He waved toward the woods.

They thronged about him. Trope and his hoarse woman, Bob, Maggs and his wife, and the Killicks and the others, shouting as if the whole thing were his fault.

He broke away from them, thoroughly out of humor with them and with all Halifax, and met Captain Gorham standing at the corner of George and Granville Streets, looking down at the mob.

"Where's your lot?" the ranger said.

Roger made a mouth. "A mile or more down the harbor shore, between here and the Narrows. A heap of rock and forest by the water!"

"That's better'n a lot inland."

"What do you mean?"

"The town might spread that way. It'll spread along the waterfront if it grows at all—and they say there's several thousand more people comin' next year. The future o' this place lies on the sea, not the land. Trade, fishery, His Majesty's naval station, all that."

"That's too vague, Captain. I want a plantation."

"Son, the on'y farmin' land in this province lies on the Fundy side—and there's a 'Cajun Frenchman squattin' on every acre of it, figgerin' how he can cod the English along and sell his produce to King Louis, same as always. He can't read nor write and he don't want to learn. He can recognize King Louis' mug on a coin and that's all he cares to know. Cornwallis is tryin' to get 'em to sign the oath of allegiance but he might's well talk to these trees. They're under the thumb of a wild priest called Le Loutre who hates

the English like poison. The on'y way Cornwallis will ever get enough provisions in Nova Scotia for his garrison and fleet and town is to root the 'Cajuns out and settle English people on the Fundy farms. I don't mean people like these Halifax settlers, either. I mean folk from New England, that know how to live in this country."

"But you couldn't cut down the Acadians as you'd cut down these pines, man!"

Captain Gorham's eyes lit from within, and Roger thought of the hot blue brandy flames about a Christmas pudding.

"Couldn't I, though?" he asked softly. "Son, I've been fightin' up and down this country since '45. I've seen French and Injun war parties led down the valley to Fort Anne time and again by 'Cajun guides—seen my men killed and scalped in the wood-choppin's, seen 'em carried off to Quebec for ransom, seen 'em tortured to death on the spot. I commanded the Massachusetts troops in that valley in '47, when Noble's men were caught in their winter quarters in a 'Cajun village—Grand Pré, remember that name!—and slaughtered like rats. 'Cajuns? They're varmints, same as Injuns; and they've got to be rooted out, same as Injuns, afore there can ever be peace and plenty for the English in Nova Scotia."

"Interesting," Roger murmured, but his indifference showed in his face. Injuns, 'Cajuns, the Valley, Fort Anne, Louisburg, all seemed as remote as the moon. "I'm afraid all I can think about is Halifax—and the fact that I'm out of cash."

Gorham looked at him keenly. "The fact is, you're workin' yourself to death for nothin', cuttin' brush, and trying to break up this rock-heap they've picked for a town. Take it easy. There's twenty-five hundred pair o' hands to do that work, and more on the sea. Why don't ye join my ranger company? I could use a man like you."

Churlishly, Roger said, "Do I look as savage as all that?"

"Seen yourself in a glass lately? Besides, my lambs ain't all Injuns nor half-breeds, son. There's plenty o' white adventurers in the rangers—some of 'em's gentlemen, even. Come! What's here for a man like you? A hut by the road and a cabbage patch? Or are ye one o' those who think all hands can live by sellin' rum to each other?"

"It might be an interesting experiment, Captain. What have your rangers to offer?"

"A shillin' a day and the life of a lord. All the huntin' and fishin' ye want, rum to drink, little to do, a bonus for scalps when the fightin' starts."

"What else?"

"An education. Woods and Injuns and 'Cajuns and rivers and lakes. The country itself. Not one in fifty o' those people"—he waved a disdainful hand down the hill—"will ever set foot outside the palisades. Too scared—scared o' what they don't know. The man that's goin' to count in this colony is the feller who can range up and down the country, free o' blockhouses and forts. Oh, Cornwallis looks down his nose at me and my lambs—no uniforms, no discipline, no nothin'. But when things get hot—and they're goin' to get mighty hot in these parts some day—why, then I'll be heard respectful in the Council, and it'll be 'Cap'n Gorham this,' and 'Cap'n Gorham that,' and 'His Majesty's Corps of Rangers' where all ye hear now is 'Gorham and his crew of lazy scoundrels.' "

Roger shook his head resolutely. "I've done with fighting, Captain. Had my fill of it across the sea. There must be some other way to earn a shilling in this colony."

"Ha!" Captain Gorham's tone conveyed his opinion of a man who preferred working to fighting. "Well, as it happens, there is somethin'. Cornwallis wants a sawmill built across the harbor where there's a stream flowin' out of a couple o' lakes. I've got my man Gilman posted over there with some o' the boys, for a guard, but he's had some trouble gittin' help. Now you and your little brood o' Londoners—"

"What sort is Gilman?"

"A good feller," Gorham drawled, and added, "Smart, too."

"A SHILLIN' a day, and rations and all the rum ye can drink," Gilman said. His handful of wild men in buckskins had made a clearing in the pines above the shore and built a log house for their commander and a few brushwood lean-tos for themselves. The stream fell down the slope over a boulder bed and filled the surrounding woods with its hiss and pother. Tall spruce and fat white pine stood all about it, as if awaiting the saws. Gilman and his merry men had been there a month and so far had accomplished nothing beyond the hut and the small clearing, where two or three rangers were squaring a pine log for one of the mill sills, taking indolent turns with a broad-axe. A rum cask stood at Gilman's door with a cup hung on the spigot. A wisp of smoke curled upward from the ashes of a fire before the house, apparently the camp cooking-place, a ring of fire-reddened stones crossed by a pole on a pair of forked stakes, and dangling from the pole a number of pothooks ingeniously fashioned from forked twigs. Muskets leaned against the house wall in the sunshine. Two bark canoes were drawn up on the shore and covered with old moose-hides to keep the sun from melting the gum on the seams.

There was no stockade, not even an abattis like the one now being thrown about the site of Halifax. The only sign of defense here was the half-dozen loopholes cut in the house logs. The whole place breathed an air of ease.

"Cut yourselves some lean-tos and make yourselves to home," said Gilman generously. "Don't kill yourselves. We've got all summer. Time enough to work hard when cold weather comes."

The cockneys broke into delighted smiles. This was something like it! Ecod, this drawling colonial fellow was a bit of all right! Imagine Cornwallis saying anything like that! They slid into Gilman's *dolce far niente* with all the righteousness of toilers come to ease at last, though some of the women looked doubtful and Mrs. Lumley declared outright that no good would come of it.

Once a week Gilman sent across to the town for their rations and another cask of rum. He posted a sentinel every day, and the man's watch was fixed not on the woods but upon the shipping and the town. When a boat drew across with one of Cornwallis's officers on a tour of inspection, there was a warning shout from the sentry post, then a bustle, axes falling, chips flying, and three men marching up and down with muskets poised in readiness along the edge of the clearing.

Roger was amused at first, then bored—and puzzled. He supposed the indolence of the rangers came partly from the Indian blood in so many of them, but mostly from their long sojourn at Fort Anne, where Mascarene had kept them close to the ramparts. Their business was to fight Injuns, they told Roger. These other things—here a gesture toward the proposed site of the sawmill—were just a notion of those gold-laced gentlemen over there—a thumb at Halifax—who didn't want anybody loafin' but 'emselves!

Captain Gorham was their *beau ideal* of a commander, lazy, genial, a wolf at the smell of an Injun or 'Cajun, a good forager in His Majesty's commissary or in the woods as occasion demanded, a bland and ready shield against work of any kind. Yet his lieutenant, Gilman, impressed Roger as a man of energy, with a keen eye to the main chance. He was not here for his health, he told Roger mysteriously. He looked and talked like one of the Boston traders who now swarmed in the lower town.

Across the water, Halifax made a brown splotch on the green hillside. Its face was changing already with the influx of New Englanders. A growing number of the first crude huts were assuming the outward appearance of New England cottages, with clapboards nailed on over the logs, and small-paned windows added, and steep-pitched roofs to shed the winter snow. Here and there a frame house was rising, with sawn timbers, boards and clapboards from Boston, with an upper half-story lit by dormers in the steep shingled roof, and a great square chimney of red brick.

There were still no defenses except for the rude abattis of felled trees about the town and a swivel-gun mounted upon a gravel-filled hogshead at each corner of the governor's modest dwelling on George Street by the new town pump. Men who had seen Louisburg laughed at the comparison.

There was some notion of a settlement about Gilman's sawmill when it was built, to be called Dartmouth, so the rangers said. Some patron's name, no doubt; but Roger thought of Dartmouth in the pleasant west country of England and was rather pleased. Not a bad place, this. He was astonished when in mid-September Killick returned from a trip across the harbor and told his wife to bundle up her things.

"T'ain't that I don't like bein' with you, sir," he explained to Roger, "but this layin' about and playin' at wood-cuttin' don't strike me natural-like. Besides, I'm a waterman and my old 'ooman dreams o' fish."

"What are you going to do?" Roger asked.

Killick ducked his head toward the harbor mouth. "Fish out there is thick as stones in George Street. All ye need is a canoe and a hook and line. There's some smart coves already in the business, and all the town for market. They sell their fish in that swampy square above the beach, a proper little Billingsgate; but that's for them as don't know better. I'm goin' to make my 'ooman a bit of a tray and she can cry my fish through the streets and get the best price."

A few days later Trope and his bearded lady departed, declaring that the air was better on the Halifax side. Trope added, with his malicious old grin, that no man could respect hisself livin' off 'Is Majesty's bounty when the town needed an honest lodgin'-house for strangers. They departed in the ration boat, Mrs. Lumley looking back with baleful eyes on Roger and Gilman.

GILMAN thrust his hands into his belt and said abruptly, "Your little crew is thinnin' out. What's the matter? Don't I treat 'em good?"

"They don't like so much of their own company. They want the smell of the crowd. Besides," challenged Roger, "what's here for them? This sawmill—will it ever be built?"

Gilman's cool eyes twinkled and a grin spread over his thin lips. "D'ye want the truth? I'll tell ye, Sudden. It's every man for himself in a new country and devil take the hindmost. This here's a mighty pretty lay-oút for a sawmill, with the finest kind o' market right across the water. Now why should His Majesty get all the profit? Listen! Those quill-drivers over there are countin' the cost, and bye-and-bye, along about October, say, it's goin' to add up to a nasty figger—and no boards in sight. Then Cornwallis'll get up on his high horse, declare the whole thing worthless and decide to cut the loss. Then I'll buy it in—at ten or twenty guineas, say—half-finished as it stands. Next

spring I'll be sawin' as pretty as ye please and raftin' boards acrost the harbor like a good 'un. Cornwallis is payin' five pounds a thousand feet to those rogues in Boston and draggin' it here at gov'ment expense. Pity, ain't it, if I can't get four-pound-ten delivered on the beach? Why, if things go right, in five years I can make my fortune!"

"If it's as easy as all that," Roger objected, "why doesn't someone else build a mill?"

"'Cause there's no other stream nigh the town that's big enough to turn a good-sized mill. A stream at the Basin head, o' course, and a fair brook up the Nor'west Arm, but they're too far from the defenses. Sly, ain't I? You stick with me, Sudden. I like you. These rangers o' mine are good fellers but they ain't the kind to stay, year in, year out, pullin' boards off o' the saws. I'll give ye a good deal, too, mind that."

"But is it honest?" Roger asked, and smiled.

Up shot Gilman's brows. "Who said anythin' of honesty? What's honest about this whole affair? Don't ye know the Lords o' Trade and Plantations made a pretty profit for 'emselves out o' the equippin' o' this expedition? Don't ye know His Majesty's purveyors in Boston—Apthorpe and Hancock and that lot—are makin' fortunes out o' the supplies they send up here? Don't ye know the men that's set up as merchants in Halifax are out to skin the gov'ment any way they can? Besides, what's honest about bringin' thousands o' poor devils acrost the sea on the promise o' plantation land, big chunks of it? What ha' they got, eh? A hut in that slum Cornwallis calls a town and five acres o' rock and forest outside somewhere, if, as and when the Crown Surveyor can git around to layin' it out! They were promised defense. What's to defend a man tryin' to clear his five acres in the woods beyond the town? The troops? Those redcoats ain't worth a damn in the woods and Cornwallis knows it. That's why he puts up with Gorham and his rangers—and people like me. But ye can't guard two or three thousand people with one company o' rangers."

"Who's to attack them?" Roger asked mildly. "We're at peace with France. And with the Indians—they came here and swore loyalty to the English king."

"Peace with the Injuns!" Gilman roared. "God's wounds, who ever heard o' such a thing? Cornwallis has got their marks on a piece o' paper, that's all. And what's a mark on paper to an Injun? Not that!"—a snap of his bony fingers. "Sudden, those brown devils came here with their war-paint on, bold as brass. There should ha' been a ceremony, spun out all the day and half the night, Injun-fashion, squattin' about a council fire, with each man jawin' a long spell and Cornwallis jawin' longest of all. Cornwallis should ha' insisted on 'em washin' off their warpaint, then and there. And they should ha' taken a hatchet and buried it deep, each one takin' a turn at scrapin' the dirt over it, and each one jawin' a bit in his own tongue—Cornwallis might ha' recited the Lord's prayer if he couldn't think of anythin' else. Why, anyone that's been twelve months in this country could ha' told him what to do!

"But what did he do? He received 'em aboard the *Beaufort!* Can ye sit round a fire aboard ship? Can ye bury a hatchet in the ballast? He got a 'terpreter and jawed 'em about the way they'd been actin', demandin' to know this and that about the English they'd killed and carried off around the Fundy waters. Then he read 'em a long paper, got 'em to make their totems at the bottom with a quill, gave 'em presents and sent 'em home—with the war-paint still on their faces! Why, they even give a war-dance and hollered their war-hoop there on the deck afore they left—with the English officers laughin' their heads off. 'Very quaint, these savages! Amusin', most amusin'!' " Off they went, with the bright new muskets and hatchets and knives he'd give 'em for to play like nice little boys, and he could hardly wait to see 'em over the side before he was dictatin' a despatch to the Lords o' Trade, tellin' 'em what a smart feller he was!"

"At any rate," Roger suggested, "you're not greatly worried, it seems to me."

Gilman lifted a pebble with his moccasin toe and kicked it into the bushes.

"Us rangers can look after ourselves."

ROGER sauntered upstream, where three rangers and his own little group were slowly gathering rocks to fill the crib-work of the dam. The green maple leaves had turned red in the past few days, the bright red of fresh blood.

For some nights now there had been an intermittent rush of wings in the high dark—wild geese going south, the rangers said—and several times the pale fire of the northern lights, a wonder to behold. There were calms when Chebucto gleamed and burned like a polished sword between the hills, and Halifax writhed and Citadel Hill quivered like a jelly in the haze, and all the distances were blue. "Weather-breeders," Gilman said, and so they proved, for always they were followed by a gray scud whipping from the southeast and a dank wind blowing in the harbor mouth, in small uneasy drafts at first, increasing to a gale whose fury seemed all the worse for the calm that went before.

Rain came slanting down, hard-flung like spears, and all the hillside streamed. Trees swayed until it seemed they must go down before it, and recovered, threshing, in time for the next gust. But old trees touched with decay sometimes snapped off like carrots and shook the sodden earth with their fall, and the cockneys crouching in their half-demolished lean-

A hard-flung hatchet whizzed past Roger and struck Ned at the root of his pigtail.

tos wondered if their time had come. The little clearing seemed very lonely then, for the Halifax side of the harbor vanished in a gray smother of rain and when night fell there was no friendly prick of lights across the darkness.

The children whimpered and the men made frequent journeys to the keg outside the rangers' door. The women wished themselves in England.

CHAPTER XI

THE MICMACS

THE last morning of September came after one of those storms, a flaring yellow sunrise, a sharp chill and a wet smell in the air, and the pungency of broken pine twigs. Roger's people turned out early, from no in-

dustrious desire. They had huddled eight-and-forty hours in their miserable bivouacs and were cramped and hungry. The fire was lit with chunks of split pine kept dry in the hut by the weather-wise rangers, and the whole crew clustered about it, shivering, while the salt meat boiled in the great kettle and the ship-biscuit was softened in water and then laid on the hot rocks to toast.

In an hour the men were off to the chopping, glad enough to set the chilled blood moving in their veins. The mill stream was swollen to a torrent and foamed yellow down the hillside, filling the woods with its roar. Roger's chosen task lay at the mill site. He had acquired some skill with the broad-axe and liked his work of hewing white pine logs four-square for the foundation of the mill. His only companion at this spot was one of Gilman's men, half Mohawk, a dark and silent person with the name of Silas. They fell to work at once.

The noise of the stream drowned all sounds but their own. Roger was a little astonished when, after ten minutes or so, there was a sharp ringing crack from the direction of the felling gang. In a moment there was another. Silas had thrown up his head at the first. At the second, without a word, he flung down his axe and dashed away through the trees toward the hut, bounding like a deer. Mystified, Roger clutched his axe and moved rapidly through the spruce thickets toward his gang. The roar of the stream filled his ears but through it and above it there seemed to be a faint high-pitched cry, going on and on in peculiar ululations like the sound of a horse in pain. He emerged into the open where his men had been cutting timber for the mill beams. No one in sight!

He stepped over a fallen pine trunk and beheld a phenomenon. A man lay in the trampled ferns with his knees drawn up and his thin balsam-stained hands lying easily at his sides. The knees, the hands, the ragged shirt and breeches, the scrawny body belonged to Vace the barber. But they lacked the head of Vace the barber. That was gone, and where it should have been a torrent of thick blood was pouring from the red stump of his neck. Roger paused, revolted and amazed. Then, lifting his gaze a little, he saw one of the sedan chairmen—Jack, judging by the clothes—lying backward over a log. The legs were toward him, the belly formed the top of an uncomfortable arc and the shoulders were only partly visible on the other side. He wondered if Jack, too, had lost his head. He observed a trickle of blood under the log. He made a step or two away, uncertainly. His nostrils caught a whiff of something faint but tingling and old-familiar. Powder!

He began to run toward the camp and at once the figures of Ned, the other chairman, and Maggs the chimney-sweep arose like apparitions from a brush pile in the middle of the chopping, running also, Maggs uttering a long, wild cry. No lethargy about their movements now! They cleared logs and stumps and piles of slash in amazing leaps. From the forest came a chorus of war-whoops, harsh and high, and a ragged volley of muskets, sudden and wholly terrible in the peace of the autumn morning. Maggs tumbled forward several steps, head on breast and shoulders drooping, legs moving slower and slower, and knees sagging, as if in a moment he had grown tired of this violent exertion. He fell on his face at last.

A BALL whined past Roger's head. And another. He dropped the axe and wished for longer legs. But he was running extremely well. The air seemed to rush past his ears. His hat blew off. He was overtaking Ned rapidly. Something whizzed past his shoulder, a hatchet hard-flung and bowling end over end. It struck Ned at the root of his pigtail. The chairman uttered an odd sound, more grunt than cry, and went down in a heap. Roger hesitated, but a yell of triumph close behind put new springs in his legs. He cleared the body in a leap and went on down the path. Now there was firing ahead, from the camp itself. Boxed, by jove!

But there was no stopping, not with the hard patter of moccasins behind. He thanked God for the path, crooked and narrow, which forced his pursuers to run in file. Only the leading man could strike at him or shoot. His whole being dissolved into a pair of sprinting legs.

He burst into the sunshine, running hard, and there lay the camp clearing, the stumps, the scuffed brown mold, the bivouacs, the hut, the blue harbor water, all as if nothing had happened. There was no sign of the people. The fire still reeked, the big camp kettle had been scoured and set upside-down against the scorched stones to dry, and the wooden pot-hooks drawn to the end of the pole away from the heat. The hut door was closed. The tin cup dangled from the spigot of the rum keg, but it would not be needed any more; a brown stream was squirting indecently from the lower belly of the keg. All these things he noted clearly as he bounded across the clearing. The patter of moccasins stopped at the edge of the open and his ears were smitten by a wild yell of rage, which was taken up by other savage voices all around the clearing. A flung tomahawk struck the ground ahead, flung up a little spurt of the dry mold and slithered to a stop.

At the same time he noticed a musket muzzle staring like a round and intensely evil eye from one of the hut loopholes, saw a fierce bearded face in the flash of a pan inside, and then a gush of flame and white smoke. The ball sang past him and struck something behind him with a vicious slap. From the direction of the path came another yell, of anger, derision, pain—he could not tell. But now white

puffs of powder spat from the bushes all about the clearing.

He reached the door in a swarm of terrific bees which thwacked into the logs.

He flung himself against the door gasping, "Open! For the love of Christ!" and heard the slither of the bar, felt the door yield, and fell amongst silent women and children on the puncheon floor.

He had not run far, perhaps two hundred yards, but he was spent as if it had been a mile. He lay there panting in a cold drench of sweat for several minutes, hearing a furious *splat* against the logs from time to time, and the more frightening boom and jump of the door, as if under the hammer-blows of a giant, and the drone of a ball across the room. The gloom of the hut was lit at regular intervals by the flaring gun-pans of the rangers.

Nobody said a word. The women and children watched the men at the loopholes warily because their musket butts came rattling along the floor when they re-loaded, with no respect for fingers or faces.

Suddenly all was silent. No shots. No yells.

Gilman's voice, cool enough, said, "Take a squint at the harbor, Nahum. Gorham's boys must be on the way."

ROGER was skeptical. The sound of the fight must have alarmed all Halifax by this time but he could not imagine those lazy fellows of Gorham's moving so fast. But the ranger at the west loophole cried, "Here they come like blazes—dozen canoes or more. Whaleboat full o' sojers behind!"

"Uh! That's why the devils lit out. Well, they ain't got much start. Anybody hurt?"

A chorus, "No!"—"Not here"—"None o' mine, thank 'Eavens!"

But Mrs. Maggs rose up on her knees and cried to Roger, "Where's my man?"

And lean Mrs. Vace called out, "Will, Mr. Sudden—have you seen my Will?"

He shook his head, sick, and glad of the half-dark that obscured his face and his lie.

Gilman said, "Open the door—easy-like. Keep down, everybody!" He and two others stood well back in the room, aiming their muskets into the widening shaft of sunshine as the door swung open. Nothing happened. The ranger Nahum stepped outside cautiously. Still nothing. And now a chorus of fierce yells from the waterside and a rush of men in buckskin, Gorham amongst them.

Roger stepped out of the hut and picked up the tomahawk which had missed him so narrowly, a well-made thing with a slim ash handle, brown and polished with use, and decorated with a little knot of yellow-hammer feathers at the butt. Its slender triangular blade was of brass, incised with tiny manikins, canoes, wigwams, moons and suns, and with a piece of fine steel set cunningly into the broad end and ground to a razor edge. No trade hatchet, this. Made in an armorer's workshop probably, at Louisburg or Quebec, for someone of importance to the French. It balanced in his hand beautifully. While he dandled it, Gorham in a few terse questions gained all that Gilman knew. It was not much. The men at the camp had heard a couple of shots up in the chopping and quickly gathered the women and youngsters into the hut. Then hell broke loose.

"Micmacs?" grunted Gorham. "Malicetes? Abenakis?"

"Micmacs, by the whoops. We didn't git a square look at any of 'em."

"After 'em boys!" Gorham cried.

His fifty rangers swung into a long file trotting up the path like a human snake. Roger fell in behind, urged by some bloodthirsty instinct which seemed to come from the deadly thing in his hand. Behind them boomed the cannon of the alarmed ships in the roadstead, firing into the woods at half a mile, a sad waste of His Majesty's powder and shot. Behind them also sounded the cool voice of Gilman reassuring the hysterical women. He had stayed behind—to look after His Majesty's sawmill.

They came upon Ned first, stripped of his jacket and breeches, the top of his head a raw horror, roughly circular, with the white of the skull showing partly through the bloodstains. The body was warm and flaccid. The blow of the flung hatchet had stunned him and thrown him down, and then a triumphant savage had leaped upon him with a knife-slash at the throat that had nearly severed the neck. Farther on lay Maggs, scalped also—a poor prize for his hair was thin. His staring eyes directed a look of mute inquiry at the sky. The rangers

went on swiftly, questing like dogs along the edge of the chopping, while Gorham and Roger paused at the bodies of Vace and Jack.

"Micmacs," Gorham said with finality. "They like to take the whole head if there's time. Must ha' been scalp-and-run with the other two. Well, a head's a heavy thing and awkward carryin'—we may come up with the devils."

The rangers were off again. One of their scouts had found a game path scuffed up by moccasins. It wound up the slope, roughly following the course of the stream.

"Mark this," Gorham said to Roger as they joined the pursuit. "Never linger by fallin' water if ye can help it. It drowns all sounds but a shot or a war-whoop. And when ye hear *them*, ye've heard your last."

For a time the long file trotted up the slope. Then something happened at the head of it. Shouts. A shot. Then three shots and a wild yelling. A quiver came back along the human snake. Without an order, without a word spoken, it disintegrated, some men plunging into the woods on the right of the trail, others to the left. Gorham kept on the path and Roger followed. It was admirable, the instant arrowhead formation in case of ambush, the swiftly wheeling flanks to bring the whole company into line towards the front, and the commander in the center where he belonged—all done as if by instinct. Shooting continued ahead. It lacked the flurry of a fight. A steady *pop-pop-pop* as of men firing at a mark.

In another minute or two they were standing on the shore of a lake in a bowl of low forested hills. Upon its surface at two or three hundred yards and rapidly drawing away were ten canoes. Seen thus from astern, with their low hulls and the furiously plying arms and paddles, they looked like brown grasshoppers walking on the surface of the water. A number of rangers were kneeling in the bushes, trying hopeful long shots. At every futile splash the fleeing war party uttered a derisive howl.

A ranger held up two human heads for Gorham's inspection. They did not belong to Vace or Jack. The faces were broad and as dark as old leather, daubed with red ocher in angular streaks, with rings of charcoal about the eyes. The long coarse hair, stiff with grease, was gathered with a thong on top of the head. The raw edges of the severed necks dripped a red patter on the ground at the ranger's feet.

"Micmacs all right," Gorham observed. "Why didn't ye jest scalp 'em?"

"A head fer a head," the ranger grinned. "We got three. Cass is scalpin' t'other."

Roger walked over to a little knot of buckskins who were regarding with interest some object on the ground between them. An Indian lay there, shot through the back. A small stone ornament hung about his neck, crudely carved in the shape of a fish. He was quite naked except for a leather clout slung about his crotch

from a thong around his waist. The red pool beneath him was spreading and trickling slowly toward the lake. The ranger, Cass, knelt on the brown hairless chest, busy with a scalping knife. He ran the sharp point expertly around the head. A line of bright blood appeared, swelled, stood out like a red cord for a moment and then broke in little dribbles down about the ears. Cass slipped the knife-point under the skin at the back of the head and turned up a flap of the scalp. He rose and put a foot on the neck, grasped the thick black topknot and made a sudden wrench. The scalp came off with a nauseous peeling sound.

Cass held high the limp black wig and uttered a long harsh cry that rang over the lake. But Roger was staring at the human wreck on the ground. It was alive! The glazed black eyes seemed to bulge from some emotion within, the lips snarled apart and showed two rows of strong white teeth. They uttered no sound, yet those eyes and lips conveyed to Roger a vast and terrible hatred that would go on, long after the flesh was dead. We can kill, but can we conquer *that*, he wondered.

TWO men picked up that dead-alive thing by the feet and shoulders and swung it into the lake with a cheerful "Heave-ho!" The head lolled, the brown breast rose, gleaming, for a full minute, rolled a little and went down.

"Well," Gorham said, "We've got some hair to show Cornwallis, anyhow."

"Reckon he'll pay fer it?" Cass asked.

Gorham shot a swift side-glance at Roger

and winked at Cass. "Reckon not. 'Tain't accordin' to the laws o' war as the cap'n-general knows 'em—not yet, it ain't. But those devils'll come again, and this is the way they'll come, s'likely, not down that river at the Basin head, where Cornwallis wants me to build a fort."

The retreating canoes were vanishing into the woods at the far end of the lake.

"Aren't you going after them?" Roger demanded, with a wave of the tomahawk.

"What'll we use for canoes?" retorted Gorham humorously.

"We can run around the shore. The lake is small."

"Son, where there's one lake there's usually another, a string of 'em perhaps. And beyond that there'll be a portage and another stream goin' the other way. Them brown devils prob'ly came fifty, maybe a hundred miles. The Micmac country runs clear up to Gaspé."

"Then carry your canoes up from the harbor. It isn't far."

Some of the rangers grinned. The friendly note went out of Captain Gorham's voice. "Don't try to teach the old bull while your horns are green, Sudden. All right, boys, lead off in file. Let's hope Gilman's got some rum."

Back they went. But Roger remained by the lakeshore. It stung him to think of some filthy savage displaying the unfortunate barber's head as Cass had displayed that hideous black wig. Perhaps the Micmacs had cast aside those grisly souvenirs when Gorham's scouts came up with them. He began to search the bushes along the shore. The leaves of the red maples were falling now. Dry and crisp, with edges curled and stem up-turned, they sailed on the water like little scarlet boats. From a rock at the waterside he could see the dead Indian lying on the bottom a few feet away. The dark body was the color of the bottom, a mat of last year's sunken leaves gone rotten. If he had not known it was there he would not have seen it at all. He pushed on around a point in the shore. Gorham and his rangers! He wondered what to make of them. Their spirit seemed composed in equal parts of courage and cowardice, indolence and energy, with a strong dash of cruelty thrown in. When idle, they passed the time in almost maniacal drunkenness and would lie down with anything in petticoats, however ugly or depraved. Yet on a trail that suited them they would go for weeks with little rest and less food than a dog; and at the end of it they would turn back like poltroons or fight like heroes according to which mood they happened to be in. All this he knew from their own tales. He wondered if he would ever understand them. One thing was sure; they were a part of the country. Some instinct of his horse-breeding ancestors gave him a notion that some day, somehow, the country would produce a kind of men with less of those faults and more of those virtues, and they would sweep away the terror and the mystery of this silent green hell and march like gods across the continent. How long would it take? He thought of that feckless mob across the harbor. A century? Longer, probably.

He came upon a small reedy finger of the lake reaching a few yards into the shore and overhung at its tip by a mass of huckleberry leaves. The outlet of the lake was just beyond—the beginning of the mill stream. He could hear the rush of water. In thrusting his way through the bushes he put his foot on something that yielded and, looking down, he saw the gunwale of a canoe, cunningly concealed.

"Ah!" he ejaculated. His whole sensation was of triumph. The greenhorn had found something that the forest-wise ranger had not even bothered to seek!

THERE was a mighty convulsion in the bushes. In a moment he was clutched about the throat from behind and thrown off his feet. Three savage figures flung themselves upon him. He clawed wildly at the hard fingers at his windpipe. Useless! It was all over in half a minute. Swiftly his ankles were bound together with a thong. Another fastened his wrists behind him. A stick was laid across his mouth, pushed violently between his teeth, and fixed there like a horse-bit with a thong around the back of his head. The three stood up, grunting, and he lay at their feet and looked up at them.

They were armed with cheap trade hatchets and muskets of an old French pattern, and wore nothing but breechclouts and moccasins. One had a pewter crucifix on a thong about his neck. Their long black hair was gathered on top of their heads in the queer, womanish fashion of the Micmacs, but there was nothing womanish about their stocky, well-muscled bodies nor their broad faces daubed with ocher and charcoal. Their brown skins stank and shone with rancid bear-grease. They were looking at the tomahawk, turning it over and over and grunting one to another.

Two of them went away in the direction of the trail. Whatever they sought they did not find, for he read dissatisfaction in their faces when they returned. When they looked at him their black eyes were hot and merciless. What animals! He had forgotten his scorn of Gorham now, hoping desperately that the ranger captain had missed him by this time. But he thought of the long winding file and Gorham's thirst. The emigrant would not be missed until the whole company stood lamenting about Gilman's bullet-pierced keg.

His captors came to a decision. He was swung into the canoe and lay face upward on the bottom. Two of the savages took their places at the bow and stern paddles. The third, he of the crucifix, sat on Roger's chest, a crushing weight. Roger gasped for breath and continued

gasping all the way up the lake. His bound hands, tortured by the tight thong and pressed under his own weight and the Indian's, sent waves of agony along his arms and into his shoulders. He could see nothing but the man's gleaming back and parts of the gunwales and the blue sky.

As the journey progressed he saw less of these things. A dark mist gathered before his eyes and a great drum beat slowly in his head.

(End of Part II)

An Indian lay there, shot through the back. A small, crudely carved stone ornament hung about his neck.

ASK ADVENTURE

Information you can't get elsewhere

THE favorite weapons of famous frontier characters.

Query:—Can you tell me what weapons the following used? (1) Jesse and Frank James (2) "Wild Bill" Hickok (3) Calamity Jane (4) Belle Starr (5) Quantrell.

I would also like a description of the various gunbelts and methods of carrying spare ammunition during the early frontier days (1860-89).

Is it safe to use smokeless powder and lead bullets in the cap-and-ball conversions to metallic cartridge guns?

—Lee Wallace,
Camp Blanding,
Florida.

Reply by Donegan Wiggins:—The James boys, Frank and Jesse, both started their career under Quantrell with cap-and-ball revolvers, most likely Colts. After the Civil War, when metallic cartridge arms were introduced, by the Colt in the Frontier Model, they went to that arm. I am recalling a statement I have seen some years past, though where I cannot recall, that the chambering of the Single Action Army and Frontier Model Colt for the .44-40, (.44 W.C.F.) was the result of a special order placed by them at the factory through a friendly merchant so they could use their Winchester rifle cartridges in the revolver, and not have a mixed lot of ammunition, with the possibility of mistakes. Both ended up carrying cartridge guns.

"Wild Bill" Hickok used the cap-and-ball Colts at first, but I understand he had a fine pair of Colt .45 Single Action Army and Frontier models on him when McCall murdered him.

Calamity Jane seems to have belonged strictly to the metallic cartridge era, as Belle Starr appears to have done, although both were girls during Civil War days. But they had not then begun to use firearms, I believe.

Quantrell lived and died a cap-and-ball gun man. I understand he used the Colt arms. Colts and Remington revolvers were the reliable arms, together with the Rogers and Spencer. There were many others made, but I consider the above-mentioned three the best of all.

Most men carried the powder in a self-measuring flask, the caps in a small round tin or brass box, and bullets in a small pouch or loose in pockets, I have heard. But some had belts with compartments for each. I've also been informed, and the skin cartridges for the cap-and-ball revolvers were in water-proof cartons of six cartridges each. With the metallic cartridges, I believe the belt with loops, as known today, was the more popular method, although I don't doubt that many men carried them in pockets, also.

I do not advise the use of smokeless powder in the cap-and-ball revolver, as one may consider the chances of trouble very likely. I have used smokeless factory loads in a good specimen of the altered Colt .36, using the .38 Colt long for which it was altered, but merely as an experiment. I don't recommend the practice.

FINE feathers don't make fine words.

Query:—Can you tell me how to determine the sex of a parrot? I have heard that only the male bird talks.

—John L. Weaver,
112 Foxhall Ave.,
Kingston, N. Y.

Reply by Davis Quinn:—It is difficult if not impossible to determine the sex of most all species of parrots, except by dissection after they are dead.

The sex of a parrot has nothing to do with its talking ability, so far as I know. Either species is apt to be able to "talk" just as well.

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★New Guinea—L. P. B. ARMIT, care of *Adventure.*

★New Zealand, Cook Island, Samoa—TOM L. MILLS, 27 Bowen St., Feilding, New Zealand.

★Australia and Tasmania—ALAN FOLEY, 243 Elizabeth St., Sydney, Australia.

★South Sea Islands—WILLIAM MCCREADIE, No. 1 Flat "Scarborough," 83 Sidney Rd., N. S. W., Australia.

Hawaii—JOHN SNELL, Deputy Administrator, Defense Savings Staff, 1055 Bishop St., Honolulu, T. H.

Madagascar—RALPH LINTON, Dept. of Anthropology, Columbia University, N. Y., N. Y.

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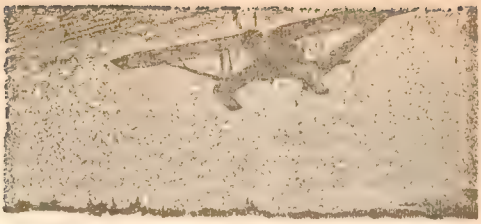
Eastern U. S., Part 1 *Maine*—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Me. **2** *Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I., Mass.*—HOWARD R. VOIGHT, 40 Chapel St., Woodmont, Conn. **3** *Adirondacks, New York*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif. **5** *Ala., Tenn., Miss., N.C.; S. C., Fla., Ga.*—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure.* **6** *The Great Smokies and Appalachian Mountains south of Virginia*—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

THE TRAIL AHEAD



McQueen hit the big lieutenant before he thought. His straight right, with a hundred and ninety pounds behind it, only rocked him. Apparently the man in uniform was going to take a lot of hitting. Never one to let a job remain half done McQueen hooked his left, pivoting and lifting as he struck. The lieutenant hit the floor and slid a dozen feet across its polished surface. McQueen looked up and down the line along the Mile Post Bar. "Plenty of you guys look like you could qualify for a soldier suit," he said. "Anyone want to say anything about why I'm still in civilian clothes?"

That was a hell of a way for a man to start his new life in Alaska in wartime but then McQueen was McQueen and had never believed in behaving judiciously under any circumstances.

"CHEECHAKO PILOT"

By R. G. EMERY

—which opens our next issue, takes you to Fairbanks to watch the wheels go round in as gripping a tale of our far-northern outpost territory as we've read in many a moon.

"PISTOLS AND COFFEE"

Another thrilling Captain Carter novelette

By William DuBois

"NO JOB FOR A LADY"

A gripping story of naval warfare in the Pacific today

By Ray Millholland

"BADGER'S GOLD"

A heartwarming tale of a prospector and his partner's dog

By Gordon Cleal

Plus the next stirring installment of Thomas Raddall's "Roger Sudden"—additional fine short stories—two unusual articles—and various informative fact features, verse and departments such as can't be found anywhere but in—

On Sale January 10th

(Continued from page 8)

close association with his animals enables him to convey to them a something that he can't quite explain, but is something other than his spoken order. Most people have some time or other know a dog-owner who swears he can just look at his dog and have it go fetch the slippers.

What do I myself believe? I do not believe a lot of things that a lot of very good people believe; and I believe some things that they don't.

AND to accompany "Tough on the Tiller" —the third story of the Alaskan lighthouse men by John Scott Douglas which we have printed recently—the author forwards the following interesting footnote—

In 1940 I was allowed the unique privilege of making the "Westward Cruise" from Ketchikan to the Aleutians on the *Cedar*, the largest American lighthouse tender. Technically the Lighthouse Service was then dead—killed by its consolidation with the Coast Guard the previous year—but in the three and one-half months I lived with "lighthouse men" I discovered that the spirit of the service was still very much alive. (By lighthouse men, I mean not only my shipmates on the *Cedar* and other tenders, but also the keepers I met or lived with at various lighthouses, and the part-time lamp-lighters as well.)

Now lighthouse men in the work before 1939 weren't particularly happy about "absorption by the Coast Guard" as they thought of it. Not that they didn't respect Coast Guardsmen, for they did. Nor did they object to being in a fighting service; they'd been fighting men for years—battling heavy seas in small whaleboats, dragging timbers ashore and swaying them up bluffs where the surf broke in great fans of spray and where no landing seemed posble, scaling 150-foot cliffs to pack 139-pound acetylene tanks to an automatic light, stalking a rolling 11-ton whistling buoy on decks awash with every sea, where a slip meant instant death. No; they laughed afterward at these risks—most of their work was in seas considered perilous by other ships, for there the majority of navigational aids were needed. Nothing mysterious explained their objection to "absorption"; it was simply pride in their work—the pride a Marine, a Navy or Coast Guard seaman, or an Army man feels for his branch of the service. Lighthouse men were justly proud of their service, too, and afraid its identity would be lost in the larger Coast Guard.

Reason existed for pride in their traditions, for at the time it was consolidated with the Coast Guard, the Lighthouse Service was celebrating its 150th anniversary. In its long history, under various authorities, it was one of the oldest federal agencies. Lighthouse men could claim even greater vintage by pointing out that lighthouse work existed in the Colonies a century before formation of a Federal government.

Twelve Colonial lighthouses were ceded by the states to the Federal government at its birth, forming the nucleus of a system of aids to navigation of all kinds today totaling roughly 30,000. The ninth law passed by the first Congress provided for the erection of lighthouses and the maintenance of those acquired from the Colonies.

Originally the work was supervised by the Secretary of the Treasury. Early documents of the service bear the signatures of Alexander Hamilton, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Adams and James Madison.

The Secretary of the Treasury's increased duties resulted in shifting supervision of lighthouse work to the Commissioner of the Revenue, and since then the service has been shuttled from one bureau or department to another. The fifth auditor of the Treasury was its step-father in 1820; a century later lighthouse work was directed by the Revenue Marine Bureau (now the Coast Guard); in 1852 a Lighthouse Board was created of Army and Navy officers and civilian scientists; its destinies were guided by the Department of Commerce in 1903; but it did not obtain separate status until President Taft created the Lighthouse Service in 1910.

Judging by old records, the *spirit* of the men engaged in lighthouse work has changed little since Colonial times. Many early keepers lost their lives in performance of duty or in exceeding its demands to engage in voluntary rescue work. In records dating back thirty years which the Coast Guard allowed me to examine, scores of similar instances can be found in more recent times. Captain John W. Leadbetter, skipper of the *Cedar*, for example, saved over 500 lives during his long years of service.

The real story of the growth of lighthouse work began with the improvement of illuminants and illuminating apparatus. Colonial lighthouses weren't greatly superior to the wood-burning fire on a high wooden tower constituting a lighthouse in the days of the Pharaohs. Colonial lighthouses had a lantern enclosing one or several lamps, were equipped with wicks and burned plant seed, lard or whale oil, and sometimes their weak glow was improved by reflectors; but the lights had no magnification.

That came with the Fresnel lenses in echelon—beautiful glass prisms collecting and concentrating a high percentage of a lamp's light along a useful horizontal beam. Kerosene in time provided a more brilliant light than whaleoil, and from it was developed the incandescent oil-vapor light; then finally came electricity, making possible such powerful lights as that of the nine million candlepower Navesink Lighthouse in New Jersey.

Automatic lights, burning acetylene gas

and requiring no keeper, were invented by the Swedish scientist Gustaf Dalén. Since approximately one hundred such lights could be established at the cost of one lighthouse, they vastly extended mariners' aids. But automatic lights cannot replace lighthouses where fogs, storms or snow conditions are common because no satisfactory automatic sound device has been devised to replace fog diaphones. And lighthouses are also needed to maintain radiobeacons—which broadcast a constant code letter, different for each station having a radiobeacon, and allowing a ship to take a "fix" on two light stations to determine its position or check instruments.

Most notable change brought about by improved apparatus, each with its own complicated system of controls, is the type of man necessary to maintain it. Completely outdated is the picture of the simple, cheery old lighthouse keeper capable of keeping a light burning and little else—if such a picture ever was accurate. The modern keeper is a skilled technician—proficient in more than a score of trades and professions—working twelve hours daily at lighthouse work and station maintenance at three-man stations; sixteen hours if he is one of two keepers. The miracle is that a sufficient number of versatile jacks-of-all-crafts can be found or trained to fill requirements. Intelligence is needed to run a $150,000 plant (the average cost of an Alaskan lighthouse) and mounting paper work constantly raised the educational requirements demanded of keepers.

In addition to changes highly intricate equipment introduced into the work, the Coast Guard began the semi-militarization of the lighthouse organization even before the war, both on lighthouse tenders and by replacing retiring older keepers with younger Coast Guardsmen capable of transmitting in code. Since the gathering and reporting of weather data is one of a keeper's many duties up north, and weather conditions are military information, it's vital to have men trained in key rather than voice transmission at every station, so weather reports won't serve the enemy. This required no wholesale shifting about of men, for most younger keepers were already adept at code.

Alaska has a thousand aids to navigation today, but lighthouse work was so long delayed in the Territory that I was able to talk to men in the service who remembered almost its entire development from its crude beginnings—an opportunity no longer existing in the States.

Of course, these old-timers could not look back to Alaska's first light. At a time when Chicago was an Indian village, the Russians maintained a light in the tower of Baranof Castle at Sitka—a three-cornered stand, each arm supporting four shallow cups of seal oil, and backed by a three-foot reflector which cast the light six miles to sea on clear nights. After an American soldier was assigned to tend the Russian light in 1868, twelve years elapsed before a beacon was established on Vitskari Island in Sitka Harbor. (A beacon in lighthouse parlance is an unlimited marker, usually a tee-pee structure of three beams with cross braces.)

Some early Alaskan aids were crude expedients. Fourteen iron buoys were placed in the Wrangell Narrows in 1884, but as they were insufficient to mark the twisting channel, holes were bored in barrels and they were set on pipes to rise and fall with the tides. A mariner steered from one barrell to the next. The first floating light marking the entrance to the Ketchikan channel was tended by an Indian chieftain; he took seriously his duty of tending a kerosene lamp secured to an anchored spruce platform.

The Territory did not have a lighthouse until one was completed at Five Finger Island south of Juneau in 1902; but for years afterward many of Alaska's lights were kerosene lamps tended by part-time lamplighters with contracts for a series of lights they tended every ten days at a monthly salary of ten dollars a light. One fox-farmer maintaining a string of lights in the Wrangell Narrows cut wood around each lantern, selling it for enough in Petersburg to buy food for his vixen; and in time his savings from lights, wood and foxes enabled him to buy a Seattle apartment house.

Part-time lamp-lighters are disappearing along our coasts but many still are employed in Alaska. They may row miles, tramp long distances along rocky beaches, or cross ice floes with ice-creepers to tend their lights. All Bering Sea and Yukon River navigational aids are maintained by such part-time lighthouse employees, their lights guiding airplane pilots as well as mariners. The farthest north light, kept burning by an Eskimo, leads more dog-punchers than ships to Point Hope.

I believe the uneasiness lighthouse men feel about losing their identity in the Coast Guard is groundless, for in the past men in this work developed special characteristics under whatever authority they were placed. Coast Guardsmen on a lighthouse tender, for example, become expert roughwater men through constant rowing in seas sometimes so heavy that few other crews, except possibly those of whalers, would attempt to launch a boat unless their ships were sinking. But the rule that lights must be kept burning becomes a matter of fierce pride to lighthouse men whether on tenders or in lighthouses, whether Coast Guardsmen or old-timers. While such integrity prevails, ships can sail the seas with minimum risk, and there is little danger that the spirit of the Lighthouse Service will die.

THREE recruits to our Writers' Brigade this month. We'll introduce them in the order in which they appear on our contents page. Charles A. Fenton, who gives us "It's

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a Story They Tell," is twenty-five years old. He was educated at Taft School and Yale University and enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force early in 1940. He served three years in England as tail gunner in heavy bombers and flew on twenty-four missions to the Ruhr, in Stirlings. He was discharged in April 1944 for medical reasons. This is his first story to appear in the U. S. He writes—

> This particular story happened to an instructor of mine, an English gunner who was later killed in May 1942, in the first thousand-bomber raid to Cologne.

NEILL C. WILSON, who wrote "The Leguminous Patience of Ah Sam," is a San Franciscan who knows the desert—he streaks off for it every chance he can get—and the Chinese character, for he writes four blocks from the biggest Chinatown outside of China.

A former newspaper editor and advertising man he traveled in China in 1915 and in the following year, as a staff editor of the Associated Press in San Francisco, one of his tasks was to boil down, every night at midnight, the news of the entire world into 166 words and send it by "wireless" to Honolulu's newspapers. "Thereby," he says, "gaining considerable experience in the art of compression."

He served in the World War and won a commission. He is an enthusiastic mountain climber—the second man to climb all fourteen of the Pacific Coast's fourteen thousand foot peaks. He helped introduce skiing in California but admits, however, that all progress in that art since 1927 has been made by others, not by Wilson. He is married and has two children. In 1936 he published a book about the epic days of the Wells Fargo, "Treasure Express," and in 1937 "Silver Stampede," a chronicle of the exciting happenings at an early-day mining camp in Death Valley, Old Panamint. Both became best-sellers.

Some years ago, in company with three others, he set out afoot from the bottom of Death Valley and climbed up and over Telescope Peak, 11,045 feet above seat level—the start had been 250 feet below sea level—to see what the conditions were that had trapped the party which gave the dread valley its name in '49. They found out! Twenty-eight hours later they arrived at a borax settlement and Wilson went into the lunch room, said, "Look me over and make me a price." "Six bits," said the proprietor. (No, he was not Ah Sam.) "All right," said Wilson, taking advantage of his five-foot-six and his hundred and thirty pounds, "the price is set. Now I'll eat and bust you."

The meal made history. Five years later he stopped there again and the restaurant man, recognizing him, hollered, "No, you don't!" Of such is the genesis of fiction sales!

Wilson has made three trips with the famous Norman D. Nevills down the Colorado River's mighty rapid-filled canyons in a rowboat, including one trip through the Grand Canyon from end to end. The boat used was 16 feet long. In all he has run 600 miles of those foaming waters. Next summer, with the Nevills and party, he will try the Snake and Salmon of Idaho—equally exciting streams.

THE name of Commander John Villiers Farrow who wrote "Goliath" for us this month may be more familiar as a motion picture luminary than as a fiction writer. A director—his latest pictures include Wake Island, Commandos Strike at Dawn, China, and The Hitler Gang—he is married to Maureen O'Sullivan, the screen actress. The following is a terse summary of his crowded life—

> b. Australia; Lord of the Manor of Surlingham, (England); LL. D. (Loyola). Married Sept. 12, 1936; 2 sons, (Michael Damien, Patrick Joseph). Author and director of many screen plays (N.Y. critics Award, 1942); has been member of several scientific expeditions. Auth: English-Tahitian Dictionary (1932); Damien the Leper (1937); Pageant of the Popes (Catholic Literary Award 1943); contbr. to various magazines. Volunteered for active duty 1939. Controller of Naval Information for the Dominion of Canada for six months, then sea and foreign duty. Contracted severe typhus fever and invalided 1942. Recommissioned June, 1943 as Commander (unpaid) for Special Services. War Medals. Chevalier of Order of Nichan Iftikhar (Tunis); Order of Crown of Roumania; created Knight of the Holy Sepulchre by Pope Pius XI ('37); Awarded Grand Cross of the same Order by Pope Pius XII ('40); Order of St. John of Jerusalem; hon. mem. Soc. Royale Humanitaire (Belgium). Clubs: Royal Societies; Royal Irish Yacht; Royal Geog. Soc.

Commander Farrow adds—

> I went to sea at an early age and served in both sail and steam. . . . After I became a writer I built various small craft, schooners, ketches, etc., and sailed extensively in the South Seas, Mediterranean, and along the Pacific Coast of California and Mexico.

THINGS began to bust wide open in the Philippines the day this issue was due to go to press so we rushed a wire right off to E. Hoffmann Price asking how come! Of course we expected MacArthur to get the jump on the Jap general staff but Au-

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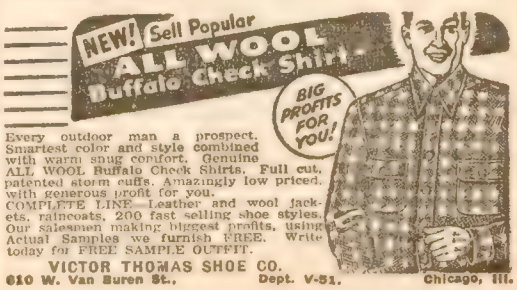
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Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Herbert A. Roig—forty-three years old, five feet ten inches tall, weighs a hundred and fifty pounds, gray eyes, brown hair, last heard of in 1939 in Houston, Texas—please communicate with his friend Frank Landon, 1146 Webster St., San Francisco 15, Calif.

THE CAMP-FIRE

(Continued from page 143)

thor Price has been calling his shots so successfully in his series of novelettes about Kane and Datu Ryan that it just didn't seem natural somehow to have a story in the works that might become a bit dated by the time it reached the newsstands—or even contain an incident or two that might not ever be going to happen at all. Of course, not being a daily paper, we had to ride our luck harder than we would have otherwise, and the remarkable thing is that we hit the nail on the head as many times as we did. For this department next month we have asked Price to tell us something about the way he managed to keep on the beam so well in the stories that preceded the one in this issue. And to make any explanation that may seem necessary for letting MacArthur land a quarter of a million men on Leyte instead of Mindanao, almost a month before Kane expected him. —K.S.W.

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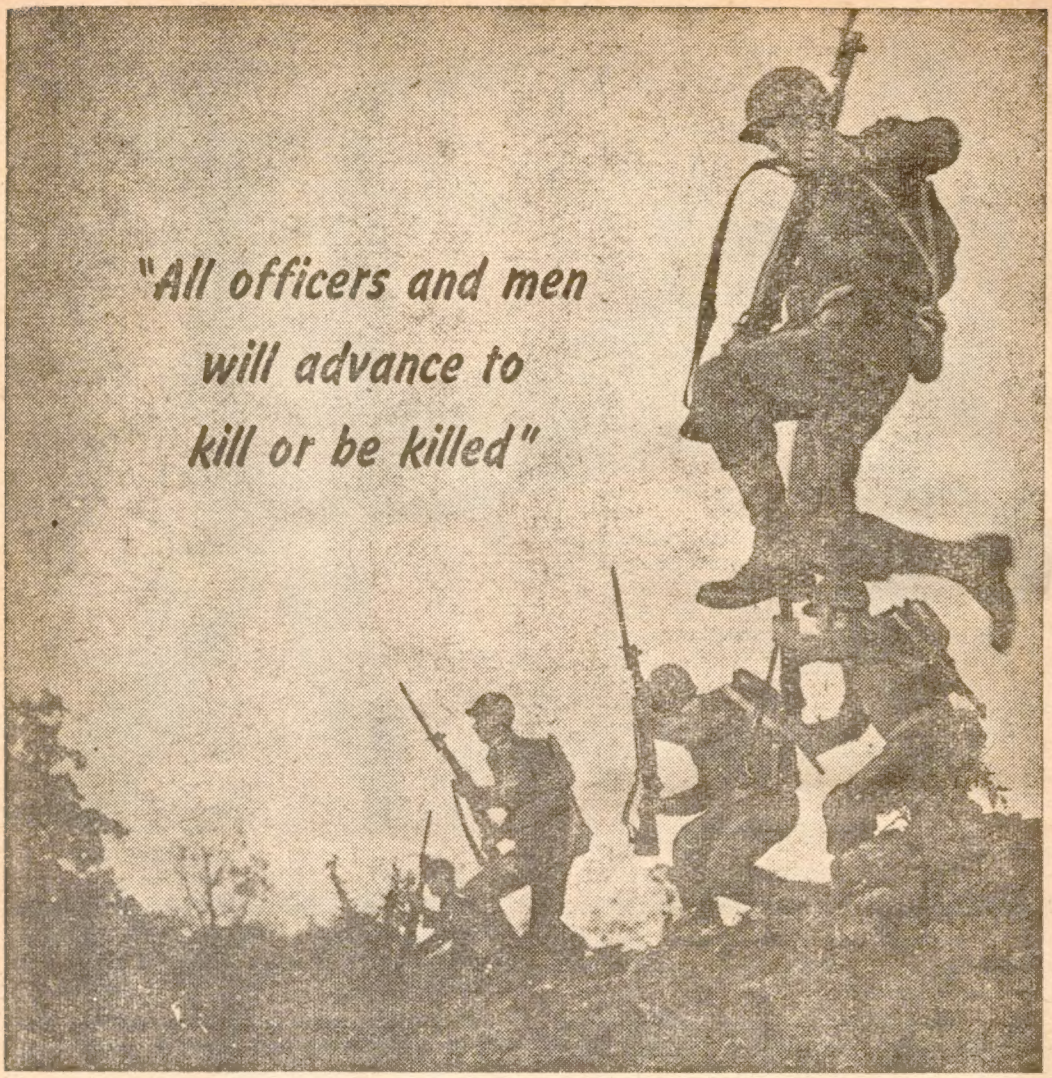

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MEN'S—Ideal for Sports-Leisure

Here's a sturdy "he-man's" jacket of a thousand and one uses that will keep pace with the fastest tempo of your busy day. Cut for real comfort—of "Spun-Rite"—magically flexible, water-repellent and shape-retaining as well as warm. Snappy yoked back. Genuine leather buttons for looks and wear. Grand, deep, saddlepockets. Split sides—so stride along as you will. You'll live in it from dawn 'til night. Choose Camel Tan with the following choice of harmonizing colors: Forest Green or Luggage Brown. Check your size from 34 to 50 on the order coupon below.

Ladies! Men! Here's the Jacket "buy" you've been waiting for. Here's quality, style, comfort and durability all combined in one to give you the finest, smartest jacket you'll find anywhere, regardless of price. And when you order the two together — one lady's and one man's jacket— you get two jackets for only $7.95.

Save 95c! Everyone — wife and husband, girl-friend and beau will want to order matching jackets in combination on this special bargain offer. You SEND NO MONEY! We'll ship C.O.D. plus a few cents postage. If you don't agree this is the greatest Jacket Bargain you've ever seen for the price, return it within 10 days and your money will be cheerfully refunded.

SEND NO MONEY

Just Fill Out and Mail This Handy Order Coupon Today

ILLINOIS MERCHANDISE MART, Dept. 1902
500 N. Dearborn St., CHICAGO 10, ILL.

Gentlemen: Send me the SPUN-RITE Jackets indicated below C.O.D. I must be fully satisfied with my purchase or will return within 10 days for refund.

Name ..... Please

Address ..... write

City ..... State ..... plainly

LADY'S JACKET Sale Price $3.95	Camel Tan	Liberty Red
Check color wanted		

Combination Price for 1 Man's & 1 Lady's Jacket Both only $7.95

MEN'S JACKET Sale Price $4.95	Camel Tan with these colors	Luggage Brown	Forest Green
Check color wanted			

CHECK SIZES WANTED
LADY'S 12☐, 14☐, 16☐, 18☐, 20☐ MAN'S 36☐, 38☐, 40☐, 42☐ 44☐, 46☐, 48☐, 50☐

MY TOTAL PURCHASE AMOUNTS TO: $.....C. O. D.

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SMOOTH AS SILK but not "High Hat"

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